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## An Exploration of Four Sixteenth-Century Artefacts from St Helen's Ranworth: Conformity, Decency, Moderation and Memory in the Post-Reformation era.

### Thesis

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An Exploration of Four Sixteenth-Century Artefacts from St Helen's Church, Ranworth:  
Conformity, Decency, Moderation and Memory in the Post-Reformation era.

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the Open University

Nicholas James Havelock Garrard

September 2018

## Abstract.

The impact of the sixteenth-century English Reformation on parish life is an academically fertile and contested subject. The growth of interdisciplinary studies and material culture studies in particular has shed new light on the extent to which ordinary peoples' faith and world-view changed in response to official reforms.

This thesis brings a fresh perspective to these issues. Through close analysis of four early Reformation-era artefacts from one rural Norfolk parish, a composite view has emerged. The artefacts from St Helen's Church, Ranworth, owed their existence to official injunctions or reformist pressures and have been interrogated from a range of material, liturgical and textual perspectives drawn from the disciplines of material culture studies, art, church and social histories.

The examined artefacts are a printed volume of Erasmus' paraphrases on the gospels and Acts of the Apostles, an Elizabethan communion cup, a wall monument of 1579 and the late Elizabethan parchment transcript of the Ranworth parish register. Attention has been given to the ordinances that instigated them and ways in which they were adopted, used and adapted by a sixteenth-century community that they were imposed upon.

This visual and materially-based investigation throws new light on a number of current areas of academic focus in Reformation studies. Examining artefacts from different genres that are joined by a shared location and chronology have yielded insights into their surrounding culture and themes of conformity, decency, moderation and memory which predominate current academic debates.

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## Introduction.

The Director of the British Museum, Neil MacGregor, writes in *A History of the World in 100 Objects* that ‘all museums rest on the hope- the belief- that the study of things can lead to a truer understanding of the world.’<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this thesis is to explore four sixteenth-century artefacts from St Helen’s Church in Ranworth, Norfolk, in order to gain greater comprehension of the impact of the post-Reformation era on a rural East Anglian parish.

This thesis is located at the locus where material culture studies, art, church and social histories meet. The artefacts will be investigated from a range of physical and textual perspectives in order to obtain a greater understanding of the official ordinances that instigated and formed them and ways in which they were adopted, used and adapted by a sixteenth-century population on whom they were imposed. This visual and materially-based investigation throws fresh light on a number of current areas of academic focus in Reformation studies, including the themes of conformity, decency, moderation and memory.

The artefacts selected for this study are a silver cup, a wall memorial and two books, one printed and the other a manuscript. The printed book is a first edition copy of the English translation of Erasmus’ paraphrases on the gospels and Acts of the Apostles, originally published in 1548.<sup>2</sup> The Ranworth parish register is a transcript on parchment of c.1597, containing records of baptisms, marriages and burials at St Helen’s Church from 1559 onwards. The Ranworth communion cup was produced by the prominent Norwich goldsmith William Cobbold in 1567. The monument to Thomas Holdiche was erected in the south wall of St Helen’s nave following his burial there in 1579. These objects were all present within Ranworth by the end of the sixteenth century and therefore share both period and local context. They have been explored within the discrete genres to which

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<sup>1</sup> Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (London: British Museum, 2011), p. xxv.

<sup>2</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *The first tome or volume of the Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the newe testament*, (London: Whitchurch, 1548), STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) / 2854.4.

they belong but also as a group of objects used by members of a single host community. This has enabled a composite picture to emerge that is greater than the sum of their constituent parts. Although they would have fulfilled different functions in teaching, recording, worshiping and memorializing they would also have overlapped in their use by Ranworth's functionaries and parishioners.

Ranworth is a rural parish situated on the south bank of the River Bure, between Norwich and Great Yarmouth in the County of Norfolk. During the middle ages, Ranworth comprised extensive areas of agricultural land, grazing marshes and a small port on the edge of the vast estuary of Breydon Water, which entered the North Sea between Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. It is served by the parish church dedicated to St. Helen, the second or third building on its site, dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. St. Helen's possesses three internationally significant fifteenth-century artefacts: a rood screen of c.1450-70, an illuminated antiphonal (c.1460) and a cantor's desk of similar date. These have received considerable scholarly attention and the cantor's desk was exhibited in the 'Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547' exhibition curated by Richard Marks at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2003-4.<sup>3</sup> The screen and antiphonal have been filmed for televised historical documentaries.

In contrast, the artefacts under consideration in this thesis have received little or no academic interest, with the possible exception of Erasmus's *Paraphrases* and the post-Reformation communion cup genre. They were produced between 1548 and 1597, offering a chronological progression that spans the evangelical Edwardian Church of England, the 1559 Settlement and its widespread consolidation by the end of Elizabeth I's reign. These two phases of the early Reformation were separated by the restoration of Catholicism between 1553 and 1558 under Mary I. The Marian era restored some sense of continuity with a worshiping past that had only been partially obliterated. Conversely, the years of persecution also helped to form a defiant English Protestant consciousness that would find expression on an extravagant scale in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Gothic: Art for England 1400-1547*, ed. by Richard Marks and Paul Williamson (London: V & A, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, Touching Matters of the Church* (London: Day, 1563).

The relatively sparse surviving documentary evidence from sixteenth-century Ranworth has meant that some of this thesis's conclusions are deductive. During this period, Ranworth would have been a small but prosperous community blessed with good agricultural land, woods and marshes that would have supported an affluent upper strata in village society. Its staithe on the vast estuary of Breydon gave it access for travel and trade to nearby Norwich and Great Yarmouth, and beyond it the North Sea *littoral* and Rhineland. The parish church dedicated to St Helen, the second or third on its site, had been rebuilt in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Will evidence and 1552 commissioners' returns suggest that it possessed a considerable range of devotional material culture objects, books and textiles before the Reformation.<sup>5</sup>

From the time of the Church of England's establishment by the 1534 Act of Supremacy until the end of Elizabeth I's reign, Ranworth was served by four Vicars, Sir William Moore, Richard Mable, Sir John Taylor and Thomas Wright.<sup>6</sup> Moore was appointed Vicar by the Abbot and Canons of Langley Abbey, who held the parish's patronage until the Dissolution. His successor in 1551 was a Crown appointee, Richard Mable who was incumbent during the rest of Edward VI's reign until the last year of Mary I. Sir John Taylor, appointed by the Crown in 1558, during the period of England's restoration to the Catholic Church, would serve most of his ministry under the Protestant Elizabeth I until his death in 1583. By this time the parish's patronage had been purchased by its leading family, the Holdiches, and Thomas Wright would have been appointed by John Holdiche, Ranworth's Squire.<sup>7</sup> Few records of these incumbents remain in existence. Taylor is recorded in the Norwich Consignment Book of 1555 and left a will.<sup>8</sup> It is possible that the Thomas Wright who succeeded Taylor was the sub-deacon of the same name who had been ordained in the Upper Chapel at Bishop's Palace on 18 September 1557, although this Wright had been a scholar at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and

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<sup>5</sup> For example, see the Will of Robert Irying, 1473, Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre (NRO), NCC, will register, Aubrey, 13. For 1552 inventory, see A.W. Morant and J. L'Estrange, 'Notices of the Church at Randworth, Walsham Hundred', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 7 (1872), 178-211 (pp. 196-97).

<sup>6</sup> Act of Supremacy, 26 Hen. VIII c.1 (1534).

<sup>7</sup> See Francis Blomefield, *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, 12 vols (London: Miller, 1805-10), XI (1810), pp. 115-16.

<sup>8</sup> Consignment Book, 1555. Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre, DN/VIS 1/1. Will of John Taylor, Vicar, of Ranworth, Norfolk, 1583. Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre, NCC, administration act book, 1581-89, fol. 41.

Thomas Wright, Vicar of Ranworth, was not a graduate and lived until 1627.<sup>9</sup> Unlike his predecessors, Wright was a family man, and his will left various sums of money to his widow, children and grandchildren.<sup>10</sup> Whatever Wright's three closest predecessors may have lacked in family life, they appear to have made up for in theological flexibility. None of them seem to have been censured or deprived of their livings, despite ministering through very different models of ecclesiastical beliefs and liturgical practices.

Ranworth's only surviving Edwardian artefact is Erasmus's *Paraphrases*. The volume's immediate context was its imposition on parishes, cathedrals and collegiate churches soon after the beginning of Edward VI's reign, during the protectorate of the Duke of Somerset. Much of this evangelical legacy was reinstated by Elizabeth I's 1559 Act of Uniformity. Arguably, as a product of the humanist ferment in Biblical studies in the early decades of the sixteenth century, it connected the Church of England with an even earlier phase of reform. Similarly, the Ranworth cup belongs to a national replacement programme begun in the 1560s, a time of irreversible material changes in English devotional culture. Unlike its pre-Reformation predecessor, the Ranworth cup was not consecrated before use and neither were its contents. Thomas Holdiche's memorial of 1579 embodies new norms in memorialisation and the changed relationship between the living and departed. The bound parchment transcript of the Ranworth parish register dates from the end of the sixteenth century, a time when parochial responsibilities were increasing, and, I shall argue, poor law reforms required reliable information. Therefore, each artefact will shed light, however obliquely, on the period of its production. By the end of this period, the Church of England had retained many of its concrete and hierarchical medieval structures but had reframed them within Reformed theology and a particular Protestant identity and sense of national destiny, despite puritan misgivings and persistent Catholic recusancy.

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<sup>9</sup> Norwich Ordination Register, 1531-1682. Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre, DN/ORR 1/1.

<sup>10</sup> Will of Thomas Wright, clerk, of Ranworth, 1627. Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre, NCC Original Will 1627, no. 370. 'Wright, Thomas', Church of England Clergy Database, < <http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp?locKey=19888> > [accessed 30 May 2019].

In addition to the artefacts' use within a single local context within a relatively short but significant period, it is important to recognise their shared identity as parochial objects. The English parish system had been widely established by the middle of the twelfth century, but experienced shifts in function and identity during the Reformation era. Particularly in rural areas, where manorial courts were in decline, they gained functions and importance as the base unit of local government in developing Tudor administration.<sup>11</sup> The religious and physical landscape was transformed by the widespread destruction or abandonment of private chapels and successive waves of dissolutions, beginning with the suppression of religious houses between 1536 and 1540, followed by the abolition of religious guilds and chantries by the Chantry Act in 1548.<sup>12</sup> This frequently left rural parish churches as sole remaining ecclesiastical institutions in their locality. Larger church buildings were internally de-compartmentalized as chapels and altars were dismantled. In parallel with the loss of sub-parochial religious bodies, the civil authority of manorial courts was in decline. The parish church often became the sole building for parochial use, the centre of civil activity as well as locus of its spiritual life and repository of its treasures.

This would have been true to Ranworth's sixteenth-century experience. The church's patronage passed from Langley Abbey to the Crown at the dissolution, its three guilds were abolished and a nearby chapel of unknown dedication became labourers' cottages. Ranworth was merged with the neighbouring parish of Panxworth, whose impoverished parish church was abandoned. By the end of the century, St Helen's was also in a dilapidated state. Archdeacons' visitations in 1590 and 1597 revealed that the lead roof had failed and the ingress of rainwater had washed the text murals off the walls. The chancel and tower lacked glass in their windows 'so that the foules and vermin come into the church and defile the same verie uncomelie and noisomely.'<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> N.J.G. Pounds, *A History of the English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004), pp. 3-5.

<sup>12</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity & Memory in Early Modern Britain & Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2009), pp. 80-83. Walsham characterises the Reformation in the British Isles as 'a theological assault on the landscape', p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> Morant and L'Estrange, 'Notices of the Church at Randworth', p. 197.

However, new artefacts were introduced into this decaying building to replace others, providing a new material culture that would be encountered in transformed worship and invested with meanings by their users, who were encouraged by officialdom to view the past from different and antipathetic perspectives. The artefacts were intended to embody the values by which the Church of England's bishops sought to hold together a spectrum of religious beliefs that had become evident in society within a framework of uniform practices. The values they sought to instil involved period concepts of decency, moderation, conformity and memory.

Memory and authenticity are key concepts in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. In the Old Testament, when Moses encounters God for the first time, at the burning bush, God declares 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.'<sup>14</sup>

The Anglican theologian Anthony Thistleton describes this record of past human encounters with the Divine as forming

*a corporate framework of knowledge within which the individual may reach authentic faith [his italics]. [...] When Luther spoke of God, this was the God of Israel, the God of Jesus, and even, for Luther, the God of the Church Fathers.*<sup>15</sup>

Thistleton identifies 'instruments' within Christianity that ground communities in its founding events and provide ongoing life through liturgies, credal statements, pastoral oversight and especially the Bible and sacraments. These form an overarching structure 'which transcends individual experience and provides a control against undue novelty or individual innovation'.<sup>16</sup> Cranmer and the early English evangelicals shared Luther's enthusiasm for the Biblical and patristic authors. Cranmer's Elizabethan successor to the see of Canterbury, Matthew Parker, would add a national historical narrative to this framework through his selective compilation of early books and manuscripts. According

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<sup>14</sup> Exodus 3.6.

<sup>15</sup> Anthony Thistleton, 'Knowledge, Myth and Corporate Memory', in *Believing in the Church: The Corporate Nature of Faith. A Report by the Doctrine Commission of the Church of England* (London: SPCK, 1981), pp. 45-78 (pp. 60-61).

<sup>16</sup> Thistleton, 'Knowledge, Myth and Corporate Memory' in *Believing in the Church*, pp. 45-78 (p. 63).



to his interpretation of the Celtic and Pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon Churches, there was an ancient but interrupted tradition of independence from Rome, vernacular worship and clerical marriage.<sup>17</sup> This sense of continuity restored was a vital justification for the injunctions that the Reformed Church of England was required to conform to.

The Church of England's corporate memory was reconfigured with instrumental acts, injunctions, homilies and catechisms to reject and degrade much of the worship and piety of its late medieval past and reconnect it with an 'authentic' faith from previous eras. This was intended to undergird unfamiliar forms of worship and belief that sixteenth-century English people were expected to adopt. The present life of the Church also required moderation by civil and ecclesiastical canons and injunctions to avoid further schism, heresies and social unrest. Together, these would promote conformity that would give the Church of England an outward appearance of uniform practices. The hoped-for consequences would be an inward and outer decency in Church and Society. Therefore, these new artefacts express a desire for continuity with the primitive Church, embody the moderating influence of purified tradition and express aesthetic and inner decency whilst conforming to official injunction.

Each of the artefacts under consideration in this thesis possessed innovative as well as traditional characteristics. Although the beguiling idolatry of the medieval Church was shunned, officialdom was also concerned about the risks of innovation. The medieval historian Sara Warneke observed sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers' perceptions of the English as being addicted to 'newfangledness' in their love of novelty and rejection of traditional beliefs and values, leading to social and political instability.<sup>18</sup> In Archbishop Cranmer's homily 'Of Ceremonies, why some be abolished, and some retained' that he inserted after the Preface to the 1552 Book of Common Prayer, Cranmer defended ancient rites that had been retained for the sake of upholding order and discipline against those who called for the past to be swept away, adding that

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew Parker and John Joscelyn, eds., *A testimonie of antiquitie, shewing the auncient faith in the Church of England touching the sacrament of the body and bloude of the Lorde here publicly preached, and also received in the Saxons tyme, above 600 yeares age* (London: Day, 1566?), STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) / 159.5.

<sup>18</sup> Sara Warneke, 'A Taste for Newfangledness: The Destructive Potential of Novelty in Early Modern England', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 26, 4 (Winter, 1995), 882-96.

they ought to rather to have reverence unto them for their antiquitie, if they wyl declare themselves to be more studious of unitie and concord, than of innovations and newe fanglenes, which (asmuche as may be with the true setting furth of Christes Religion) is always to be eschewed.<sup>19</sup>

Period rhetoric connected with the objects, particularly the communion cup, implied that they were restorations of what should always have pertained, had it not been for the errors of the medieval Church. Alongside Cranmer's appeal for reasonable behaviour, the early modern historian Ethan Shagan argues that bishops used their authority coercively to moderate, in the period sense of the word, English Church and civil life.<sup>20</sup>

Behind each object also lies the humanity of its users and beholders. The parish and its surroundings will become partially re-populated through each part of this investigation. The *Paraphrases* reveal some of the activity and theological interests of ministers and literate laity. The communion cup offers insights into the Norwich Goldsmiths' Company engagement with their local market and the cause of reform, and how its shape and appearance would have helped ministers and communicants to form a changed relationship with the eucharist. The Holdiche memorial raises questions about why an unmarried second son of a gentry family would be commemorated and what it demonstrates about that family's place within society, and implications for their relationship with changed patterns of faith. The register offers a much broader sweep of Ranworth's parishioners as a record of arguably the most significant moments of their lives and a record of their liturgical compliance. As a particular example, issues surrounding their choice of wedding dates will be considered closely.

Interdisciplinary studies have enriched research into Reformation-era material culture and its wider historical significance. The methodology of this research draws from the disciplines of art and church history, archaeology, literature and social studies. It is a multi-faceted exploration of physical appearance, craftsmanship, material content and intrinsic significance, based on close examination of the artefacts. Wherever possible,

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<sup>19</sup> *The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI* (London: Dent, 1964), pp. 325-26.

<sup>20</sup> Ethan Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011), p. 113.

this has been conducted with comparison to other examples of their genre. This initial stage has involved recording specific features of the artefacts in detail and taking measurements and photographs. In the course of this research, several perspectives have emerged, radiating outwards from each object and sometimes overlapping, until the four objects themselves have been drawn into a hermeneutical matrix with one another.

As Rector of Ranworth, I have been privileged to study them over a long period of time in their original setting, with the exception of the parish register which has been placed in the Norfolk Archive Centre. An important ingredient of this methodology is its long gestation. By focussing on a small number of items from a single context, it has been possible to study them at intervals over a lengthy period and review each one in the light of findings relating to other artefacts in this study. This 'home advantage' has enabled some unexpected perspectives to emerge over a long period.

Although material studies are often concerned with the long-term 'biographies' of artefacts, this study is limited to the early years of their existence. Although there will be occasional references to their use in later periods, the main focus of this research concludes around 1604. It is important to recognise that the appearance of the artefacts would have been significantly different then. Re-creating their brand-new selves has been an imaginative exercise informed by other surviving examples and sometimes written accounts.

I have been fortunate to undertake this study at a particularly fruitful period for object-based histories. Professor Victor Buchli of the pioneering Material Culture Group at University College, London, argues that 'it has never been a discipline- it is effectively an intervention with and between disciplines.'<sup>21</sup> The late twentieth-century turn towards material and visual culture studies has drawn methodologies and modes of interpretation from a diverse range of disciplines, including museology, social anthropology, sociology and new archaeological approaches. In the field of art history, there was a shift of attention from iconography to semiology, exemplified by the philosophers and aesthetic

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<sup>21</sup> *The Material Culture Reader*, ed. by Victor Bruchli (Oxford: Berg, 2002), p. 13. See Bruchli's analysis of the developing Post-War tradition of British material culture studies, pp. 11-14.

theorists Hubert Damisch and Umberto Eco in the 1970s and the cultural analyst Mieke Bal and art historian Norman Bryson two decades later.<sup>22</sup>

British historian Karen Harvey identifies two main approaches to object-centred studies. One approach would tend to focus on the physical attributes of an artefact, either discretely or as part of a larger group of objects or genre, prioritising the researcher's specialist knowledge. The second methodology is rooted in art historical approaches, in which the focus of study shifts from the artefact to the emotional or psychological dimensions of its material cultural context.<sup>23</sup> Art historian Jules David Prown offers a three-stage model of this form of object-based interrogation; description, deduction and speculation.<sup>24</sup> The methodology used in this thesis involves both strands of material culture study, but with greater emphasis on the latter in the structuring of each chapter and development of the underlying cultural themes of conformity, decency, memory and moderation. In this particular context, this study's focus on sixteenth-century English society and artefacts with explicitly religious associations means that more explicit attention has been given to their spiritual rather than emotional or psychological dimensions. However, like material and cultural studies, spirituality is also difficult to define and has many overlaps with other aspects of the human psyche.

There has been growing recognition that rather than simply being the products of historical processes, artefacts also convey powerful messages to the beholder and in their existence and use can be deployed as agents of change. Harvey argues that historians need to be aware that 'objects are active and autonomous, not simply reflective' or as the archaeologist Christopher Tilley observes laconically, 'things make people as much as people make them.'<sup>25</sup> There would have been considerable potential for Reformation-era

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<sup>22</sup> Hubert Damisch, 'Semiotics and Art History', in *The Tell-Tale Sign: A survey of Semiotics*, ed. by Thomas Sebeok and Umberto Eco (Lisse: Pieter de Ridder, 1975), pp. 27-36. Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, 'Semiotics and Art History', *Art Bulletin*, 73, 2 (June 1991), 174-280.

<sup>23</sup> Introduction, *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. by Karen Harvey, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Routledge, 2018), <[www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com)> [accessed 21 May 2019].

<sup>24</sup> Jules David Prown, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17, 1 (Spring 1982), 7-10.

<sup>25</sup> Introduction, *History and Material Culture*, ed. by Karen Harvey. Christopher Tilley, *Metaphor and Material Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 76.

artefacts, intended for use in a culture with an illiterate majority, to be deployed in creating new experiences and implementing changes in ecclesiastical functions and identity. Conversely, the survival of inventories, wills and other written sources from this period, in which literacy and record-keeping grew considerably, enable some artefacts to be studied in micro-historical and quasi-biographical terms.<sup>26</sup>

The formation of these new approaches has been described as the ‘material turn’ in Reformation history, or alternatively as its ‘cultural turn’. In this context, ‘culture’ is an inexact term, and cultural history as a term is generally used to express aspects of period life, customs and values. Divorced from the connotations of high forms of art and literature, cultural history embraces a spectrum from commonplace everyday objects to major works of art.<sup>27</sup> Whilst material and cultural studies are clearly related, Harvey observes that the latter is deductive from the former.<sup>28</sup> In addition to this growing synthesis of archaeological, anthropological and social approaches, medieval and early modern historian Paula Findlen discerns that historians have turned to art historical methodologies to enable more sophisticated interpretations and art historians have widened the range of objects studied to expand their understanding of the visual aspects of material culture. Developments in literary materialism scholarship have also yielded valuable insights into everyday Renaissance and early modern everyday objects.<sup>29</sup> The trajectory of these approaches to early modern material and visual culture are likely to continue into the future in Britain and North America, where research students from a range of subjects encounter different approaches and develop literary, historical, aesthetic and haptic skills through the establishment of interdisciplinary university research centres and collaborative working between humanities departments and museums.<sup>30</sup> As a

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<sup>26</sup> Karen Harvey, ‘Craftsmen in Common: Objects, Skills and Masculinity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, in *Gender and Material Culture in Britain since 1600*, ed. by Hannah Grieg and others (London: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 68-89, (p. 70).

<sup>27</sup> *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Richard L. Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), pp. 3-5.

<sup>28</sup> Introduction, *History and Material Culture*, ed. by Karen Harvey.

<sup>29</sup> *Early Modern Things: Objects and their Histories, 1500-1800*, ed. by Paula Findlen (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 13-14. Findlen cites the work of Jan de Vries, David Freedburg and Pamela H. Smith for the convergence of historical and art historical approaches, and Margareta de Grazia, Peter Stallybrass, Ann Rosalind Jones and Patricia Fumerton for object-focussed literary research.

<sup>30</sup> *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling and David Gaimster (London: Routledge, 2017),

participant in the CHASE consortium's 'Material Witness' programme in 2014, I can attest to the value of these approaches. Literary scholar Catherine Richardson, art historian Tara Hamling and archaeologist David Gaimster describe the role of art history within material culture studies as prioritising 'the place and power of the visual' and heightening awareness of 'sensory effects of form' within an indivisible relationship with material studies and wherever possible, contextual analysis grounded in historical method in researching textual sources.<sup>31</sup>

In a previously neglected corner of the field of English post-Reformation studies, art historians Tara Hamling and Richard L. Williams's 2007 *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts* brought together a range of scholars to establish academically the connection between religious reform and the visual arts in a similar manner to Joseph Leo Koerner's study on Lutheran Germany in *The Reformation of the Image*.<sup>32</sup> Hamling and Williams observe that since the 1980s attention has shifted from the 'Magisterial Reformation', comprising legislative measures and conflicting concerns of the social elite, to evidence of use or damage found in surviving remains of churches and their artefacts that throws light on the changing experience of society as a whole as people adapted to new ways of worship and believing.<sup>33</sup> In the case of the studied group of artefacts from Ranworth Church, the interplay between their magisterial inception and parochial manifestations are central to this thesis and its conclusions. The artefacts' historical extrapolations have been strengthened by the existence of other similar objects and the remains of the literate culture in which they were fashioned. All of the objects are textual, in the sense that they are inscribed with lettering, but can also be read holistically as 'texts' in the sense that they are cultural objects under

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p.7. Walsham defines the term 'haptic' as an archaeological term to define the tactile and somatic aspects of remembering. Alexandra Walsham, 'Recycling the Sacred: Material Culture and Cultural Memory after the English Reformation', *Church History*, 84, 4 (December 2017), 1121-1154, (pp. 1124-25).

<sup>31</sup> *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. by Richardson, Hamling and Gaimster, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Hamling and Williams, p. 1. Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Hamling and Williams, p. 3.

investigation.<sup>34</sup> Belonging to an age which increasingly prioritised literacy, the artefacts can be effectively read and interpreted with the aid of official injunctions and period writings. In the case of Ranworth, where no Churchwardens' accounts have survived, the Book of Common Prayer, Bible and Book of Homilies would have provided an aural accompaniment to the artefacts in their period use.

These commonplace publications are often overlooked by scholars. However, their ubiquity demonstrates their value, as they contained material that was effectively mandatory and was equally intended for non-literate and literate worshippers.

Nevertheless, Bal and Bryson sound a cautionary note: 'it cannot be taken for granted that the evidence that makes up 'context' is going to be any simpler or more legible than the visual text upon which such evidence is to operate.'<sup>35</sup> It can no more be assumed that the written texts were used in officially-prescribed ways than the objects themselves.

Findlen highlights the constantly shifting significance and role of artefacts: 'every object takes its place in a system of use and meaning in which value is constantly being renegotiated'.<sup>36</sup> This has important implications in the study of an object such as the Ranworth communion cup, which has been in continuous and regular use since its production. A number of contemporary communicants have commented to me about the sense of connection they feel with its former users at Ranworth when they receive the cup at the administration of holy communion. This tactile expression of continuity would not have been evident to the cup's Elizabethan recipients and in all likelihood their perception of their action in taking the cup and drinking from it may also have been very different to a present-day Anglican worshipper. Conversely, an artefact like Erasmus's *Paraphrases*, that seems to have fallen into disuse in the early modern period, may appear more remote initially yet require less stripping away of subsequent layers of reception to reach an understanding of its period significance.

Although the focus of this thesis is upon four newly-instigated sixteenth-century artefacts, it is also important to remember that in post-Reformation England many

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Payne, 'Text', in *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory*, ed. by Michael Payne (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 530.

<sup>35</sup> Bal and Bryson, 'Semiotics and Art History', 174-280 (pp. 176-77).

<sup>36</sup> *Early Modern Things*, ed. by Findlen, p. 7.

objects from pre-Reformation devotional material culture were converted into domestic or new ecclesiastical uses. The early modern historian Alexandra Walsham's article 'Recycling the Sacred: Material Culture and Cultural Memory after the English Reformation' considers how this widespread practice 'served to perpetuate and complicate social and cultural memory'.<sup>37</sup> This article is of particular relevance to the reused medieval paten that was counterpart to Ranworth's 1567 communion cup.

Having assessed the artefacts in the light of this material, I have considered what else may be learned from them. For example, this led to the consideration in the Ranworth cup chapter of period science and how learned people at the time would have apprehended the physiological processes by which visual objects were retained as memories.

Each of the four objects has their own chapter and will be interrogated from a number of scholarly perspectives that will reveal both their discrete characteristics and the qualities that they possess in common. The Ranworth artefacts have yielded significant information on current scholarly preoccupations that throw light on the obligations put upon sixteenth-century clergy and parishioners and their pragmatic and conscientious responses. This study centres on one particular Norfolk parish but may also be indicative of early modern Diocese of Norwich as a whole and by extension, wide swathes of rural eastern England.

## Literature review

The historical literature of the post-Reformation period in England constitutes an immense *oeuvre*. Therefore, I intend to concentrate mostly on scholarship since the late 1960s that has particular relevance to overall arguments and material culture studies in particular. This period saw the destruction of grand narratives of the Reformation's origins and outcomes without achieving a new consensus. It has become more difficult to justify even using the singular word 'Reformation' to describe the convulsive waves and episodes triggered by official edict or popular unrest. Historians like Christopher Haigh

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<sup>37</sup> Walsham, 'Recycling the Sacred', 1121-1154, (p. 1121).



and Euan Cameron views the succession of reforms and sometimes reversals as a series of Reformations. Within British scholarship, the political, constitutional and administrative concerns of historians like G.R. Elton began to give way in the 1970s to a new generation of church historians, among them Patrick Collinson, John Scarisbrick, Christopher Haigh and Eamon Duffy. Despite their differences, they have been frequently categorised as ‘revisionists’ because they challenged classical Protestant explanations of a waning and corrupt Medieval Church ripe for reform and an increasingly educated and restless laity. Similarly, earlier scholars who supported this approach tend to be stereotyped as ‘Whig’ historians.<sup>38</sup> In his witty and sometimes ascerbic essay ‘Modern Historians on the English Reformation’, church historian Diarmaid MacCulloch characterises earlier English Reformation scholarship as ‘instrumental history: the story of the past told to justify the present.’ He refers to these histories as ‘tribal’ narratives. Drawing an ironic metaphor from medieval art, he identifies a central Anglican narrative, flanked by competing Roman Catholic and Free Church scholars ‘in triptych fashion.’<sup>39</sup>

The Revisionist turn in English Reformation scholarship came to prominence with the 1987 publication of a collection of essays, *The English Reformation Revised*.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Patrick Collinson’s re-appraisal brought Puritanism in from the margins that earlier Anglo-Catholic histories had consigned it to and used the expression ‘iconophobia’ to express the image-averse culture he perceived in Elizabethan England.<sup>41</sup> Margaret Aston opened up fresh insights into iconoclasm as pious expression rather than vandalism by fanatics.<sup>42</sup> More recently, the ‘Art under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm’ exhibition staged at Tate Britain in 2013-14 dealt thematically and extensively with three distinct English phases; the monastic dissolution, Reformation era and seventeenth-

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<sup>38</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *All Things Made New: Writings on the Reformation* (London: Lane, 2016), p. 242. MacCulloch characterises ‘Whig’ views on history as ‘the historiography of a complacent Establishment in every age.’ See also Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: Bell, 1931).

<sup>39</sup> MacCulloch, *All Things Made New*, pp. 241, 244-45.

<sup>40</sup> *The English Reformation Revised*, ed. by Christopher Haigh (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987).

<sup>41</sup> See Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1988), ch. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2016).

century puritan iconoclasm.<sup>43</sup> Graffiti, which was often dismissed by earlier historians as wanton damage, has been re-evaluated. In recent years intense interest in medieval graffiti has resulted in an ever-increasing number of ‘finds’ that are swiftly disseminated through social media groups.<sup>44</sup> Matthew Champion, Director of the Norfolk and Suffolk Medieval Graffiti Survey published *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England’s Churches* in 2015. Champion’s work demonstrates a rich diversity of period expression apparent in church buildings, and also, I discovered, in the margins of the *Paraphrases*. Recognising graffiti as an expression is not to assume its interpretation, and Champion warns against ahistorical explanations. In the case of cross markings, identified by antiquarians as ‘pilgrim crosses’, he highlights the lack of evidence for this hypothesis: ‘with no other obvious or documented answer coming forth, it has become regarded as a fact as the decades and centuries have passed. In reality, the theory has nothing to support it except continued usage.’<sup>45</sup>

Hamling and Williams observe that Collinson’s hypothesis faced an early challenge in 1991 with the publication of historian Tessa Watt’s *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640*.<sup>46</sup> Watt’s use of post-1580 evidence of religious imagery in print culture and the domestic sphere would be followed more recently by Hamling’s extensive research into decorative arts in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British domestic settings that further challenged the iconophobic hypothesis. In the light of the evidence provided by surviving artefacts depicting biblical scenes and religious themes, Hamling argues that complex processes took place in Elizabethan England leading to an emerging Protestant visual culture.<sup>47</sup> In this thesis I am proposing that this visual culture is evident in the

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<sup>43</sup> *Art under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm*, ed. by Tabitha Barber and Stacey Boldrick (London: Tate, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> ‘English Medieval Graffiti’, <  
<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=english%20medieval%20graffiti> >, [accessed 23 May 2018]

<sup>45</sup> Matthew Champion, *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England’s Churches* (London: Ebury, 2015), p. 64.

<sup>46</sup> Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991). *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Hamling and Williams, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Tara Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation England* (London: Yale University, 2010), pp. 5,7-8.

aesthetic and ethical values of the artefacts from St Helen's Church. This is particularly true for the communion cup and monument, but has implications for both books as well.

As Eamon Duffy points out in *Saints, Sacrilege and Sediton*, revisionism is simply a historian's job, and the book's contributors did not share an agenda beyond a consensus that the Reformation was a lengthy process and offered more positive re-evaluations of Tudor Catholicism and popular religion.<sup>48</sup> In common with sixteenth-century reformers, historians of the Reformation operate in reaction to their inherited culture, one another and sometimes their own earlier views. For example, the English historian A.G. Dickens, who supported a qualified form of English Protestant narrative, wrote that his work self-consciously challenged an earlier status quo created by Anglo-Catholic historians, 'Pugnesque sentiment' and an idealised medievalism of the Gothic Revival, which he viewed in turn as a reaction to Victorian industrialism.<sup>49</sup>

Importantly, rather than shifting the balance of Reformation grand narratives, revisionism also saw a fundamental re-framing of historical enquiry. Walsham observed in 1999 that 'the debate about the English Reformation is being refocussed. Interest is shifting from why and when to how England became a Protestant nation.'<sup>50</sup> The issue of how this cultural shift was accomplished has been addressed by historians Norman Jones and Andrew Pettegree. Jones addresses the issue of religious cultural change over three generations from Henrician origins to Elizabethan Settlement, whilst Pettegree focusses on a 'culture of persuasion' involving print, preaching, music, art and a 'culture of belonging' that enabled millions to make a traumatic break with the past.<sup>51</sup> Among British Reformation historians generally, paradoxes have taken the place of former orthodoxies in recognition of the inconsistencies and ambiguities evident within Catholic and Protestant teaching and practice of the time. The early modern historian G.W. Bernard's 2012 book on the late medieval English Church hypothesises that it possessed

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<sup>48</sup>Eamon Duffy, *Saints, Sacrilege and Sediton: Religion and Conflict in the Tudor Reformations* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur Geoffrey Dickens, *The English Reformation* (University Park: Pennsylvania University, 1991), pp. 34-35.

<sup>50</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> Norman Jones, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaptation* (London: Blackwell, 2002), Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005).

a brittle strength, vulnerable to criticism and royal intervention that would cause its enforced transformation in the sixteenth century.<sup>52</sup> Within the setting of the English Church, Bernard followed Cameron's hypothesis of the pre-Reformation Church's vulnerability on a European scale in his *European Reformation*.<sup>53</sup>

Revisionist history has derived impetus from fresh sources, namely the visual and material evidence of the late medieval Church. These appear to strongly contradict earlier hypotheses of an institution in terminal decay by the beginning of the sixteenth century. Bernard describes how his discovery of Pevsner's *Buildings of England* lead him to an appreciation of late Medieval churches built in the Perpendicular style: 'did not all these churches suggest that the church was maintaining, indeed increasing, its appeal to laymen and laywomen? Was there not something wrong with the orthodoxy which I had absorbed?'<sup>54</sup> Through church historian Eamon Duffy's seminal *Stripping of the Altars*, surviving material culture or its written records became central to this hypothesis.<sup>55</sup> Duffy researched extensively the surviving material culture of East Anglian churches and a relative wealth of will material from this region to undergird his thesis of a pre-Reformation Church that offered a robust communal religious framework and devotional opportunities for groups and individuals, supported by an active and informed laity. Ranworth Church's surviving medieval furnishings and artefacts appear prominently in his study. The book's title refers to the loss not just of material culture but spiritual orientation and memory, largely attributed to officially imposed changes.

Duffy developed his hypothesis further in a pioneering micro-history centred on one remote parish in Exeter Diocese during one incumbency. His *Voices of Morebath* analyses the period covered by the ministry of Sir Christopher Trychay between 1520 and 1574. Revealing glimpses emerge in the parish records of the loss or disposal of significant elements of the parish's pre-Reformation material culture and gradual replacement by new objects such as the *Paraphrases*, parish register and communion cup. Duffy notes that Morebath 'achieved this high state of conformity, and with a good

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<sup>52</sup> George W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability Before the Break with Rome* (London: Yale University, 2012).

<sup>53</sup> Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1991).

<sup>54</sup> Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church*, p. viii.

<sup>55</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (London: Yale University, 1992).

deal of prodding' by the archdeacon and bishop, occasionally paying fines for non-compliance.<sup>56</sup> Although Morebath and Ranworth were situated in areas with traditionally-orientated religious cultures, they were geographically remote from each other and offered different forms of conservative expression. Duffy observes that during the disturbances of 1549, West Country rebels rejected the new Prayer Book, whilst Robert Kett's followers encamped outside Norwich on Mousehold Heath publicly stressed their religious conformity.<sup>57</sup>

Duffy's hypotheses have been challenged by other revisionists, most notably the Church historian Diarmaid MacCulloch. MacCulloch's broad field of study includes a landmark biography of Thomas Cranmer and incisive studies of the Tudor Church in his native Suffolk, opening up regional studies as a fertile field for Reformation scholarship.<sup>58</sup> He argues that the Church of England was largely successful in establishing a form of Protestant settlement that most English people were prepared to subscribe to and in many cases derive spiritual comfort from. MacCulloch has done much to demolish the reputation of earlier Anglo-Catholic Reformation historians, and has emphasised discontinuity with Catholicism, albeit with sufficient ambiguity in liturgy and official belief to allow multiple voices to be heard. His appraisal of the sixteenth-century Church of England argues that it became strongly influenced by Calvinism and experienced considerable success in becoming a national Church with a particular Protestant identity.

In contrast to both Duffy and MacCulloch, Walsham stresses the high level of continuity between the pre- and post-Reformation English Church. However, she acknowledges that both selective amnesia and reconfigured corporate memory in the post-Reformation period led to three transformations; rejection of medieval forms of worship and belief, a reduction of the sacraments that changed their meaning and transformed attitudes towards the departed. Walsham describes herself as pre-occupied with the tension between 'official theology, institutional structures and individual experience.'<sup>59</sup> Recently, church historian Alec Ryrie's *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* has surveyed a

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<sup>56</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reform and Rebellion in an English Village*, (London: Yale University, 2001), p. 179.

<sup>57</sup> Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath*, pp. 129-31.

<sup>58</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (London: Yale University, 1996).

<sup>59</sup> Alexandra Walsham, 'History, Memory, and the English Reformation', *Historical Journal*, 55, 4 (December 2012), 898-938 (pp. 907-09, 901).

wide swathe of period devotional writing and imagery and describes an intense inner life with highly evident spiritual struggles in the experience of early modern Englishmen and women.

Despite being a modest-sized rural parish church without public transport links, St Helen's Church, Ranworth receives a steady stream of academic visitors and possesses a growing pre-Reformation historiography, due to an iconic status of its own. However, it is important to mention the pre-occupations of recent authors.

In his *Little History of the English Country Church*, architectural historian Roy Strong follows the path of *The Stripping of the Altars* in his elegiac assessment of Ranworth's rood screen, which 'gives an unforgettable impression of the richness that was swept away by the Reformation.'<sup>60</sup> As yet, no writer has yet mourned the sweeping away of Ranworth's post-Reformation furnishings; the destruction of its box pews and relegation of its royal arms to the tower. The Georgian commandments board that hung behind the altar now conceals the bricked-up entrance to a removed west gallery and is in poor condition. The church's early twentieth-century restorers had no interest in telling its Elizabethan stories. Modern iconoclasm of early Protestant Ranworth attracts no adverse comment.

However, the absence of a study on early Protestant Ranworth points to the incompleteness of recent studies of the medieval parish. *The Stripping of the Altars* suggests a minimalist approach to iconoclasm, which the survival of much of the rood screen and Antiphoner also implies. However, almost no relief carving or stained glass has survived and in the nineteenth century a stone gable cross was discovered in the bottom of a dried up well, suggesting it had been thrown down in an act typical of general waste disposal. The question of how and when the providers of an opulent religious material culture and their descendants changed their approach has yet to be addressed. However, this thesis deals with the incremental changes that they would have experienced, and the survival of these four artefacts attests to their successful adoption by a parish community and its officials, whether or not it rejoiced in them. Literature that is

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<sup>60</sup> Roy Strong, *A Little History of the English Country Church* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), pp. 43-44.

specific to the genres of the studied artefacts will appear in the relevant chapters, where its implications will be closely examined.

The terminology I have used to describe non-papist individuals and their beliefs during this period is ‘evangelical’ and ‘Protestant.’ It has become a historical convention to describe the early reformers as ‘evangelicals’ for their shared Gospel-based concerns and zeal but otherwise diverse nature. This was also Luther’s preferred term for his new movement of the 1520s. The term ‘Protestant’ also emerged in Germany and entered English usage during Mary I’s reign. Use of these terms in this thesis is based on this rough chronology but as Ryrie helpfully points out, ‘this should not distract us from the fact that later Protestantism was present in all its essentials in this early evangelicalism.’<sup>61</sup>

Throughout this thesis the commencement of each year will begin on January 1 for dating purposes, regardless of the conventions observed in source material.

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<sup>61</sup> Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2012), p. 470.

Chapter one.

‘Reading, marking and bearing it away’: assessing the impact of the English *Paraphrases* through examination of the Ranworth copy and others held by the Norwich Dean and Chapter’s Library.

Introduction.

Article Seven of the Royal Injunctions, written by Archbishop Cranmer and published in August 1547 required every parish church to purchase a large edition of the English Bible within three months and *The first tome or volume of the Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the newe testament*, as yet unpublished, within a year:

and the same set up in some convenient place within the said church that they have cure of, whereas their parishioners may most commodiously resort unto the same, and read the same. The charges of which books shall be rateably borne between the parson and proprietary, and parishioners aforesaid, that is to say, the one half by the parson or proprietary, and the other half by the parishioners.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, Article Twenty added

that every Persone, Vicar, Curate, Chauntery priest and stipendiary, being under the degre of bachilar of divinitie, shall provide and have of his awne, within three monethes after this visitacion, the newe Testament, bothe in Latyne and in Englishe, with Paraphrasis upon the same of Erasmus, and diligently study the same, conferring one with the other.<sup>63</sup>

The dual purpose laid out for the *Paraphrases*, as a study aid for less educated clergy and a publicly displayed text for lay parishioners was as innovative as the first Book of Common Prayer would be two years later.

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<sup>62</sup> *Visitation Articles and Injunctions 1536-1557*, ed. by W.H. Frere and W.P.M. Kennedy, 2 vols, (London: Longman Green, 1910), II, pp. 117-18.

<sup>63</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, pp. 121-22.



This chapter will consider the extent to which these official intentions for the English *Paraphrases*' parochial use would be manifested in surviving volumes at Ranworth and copies held at the Norwich Dean and Chapter's Library. The volumes have been interrogated from a range of perspectives, beginning with their instigation as a royal reform initiative and Erasmus's adoption as the Church of England's first officially sanctioned authority on the scriptures. The survival of multiple copies raises questions about why this publication survived the restoration of Catholicism under Mary I and why its position was restored under Elizabeth I. Erasmus's posthumous role as a moderating authority was accompanied by translators' prefaces that sought to reconfigure memories of traditional religion, underlining its importance in establishing evangelical religion at the beginning of the Edwardian period and its subsequent restatement under Elizabeth I.

The *Paraphrases* were introduced under official compulsion but their reception and evidence of use occurred locally. They were introduced in a period of rapid change against a background of unrest that broke out soon after their arrival in Norfolk. In the words of the English translation's editor, Nicholas Udall, the *Paraphrases* were intended for the 'reading, marking and bearing away' of scripture and wholesome doctrine. Until relatively recently, this has been viewed academically as an unfulfilled aspiration, as discussed below. However, close examination of the Ranworth volume and copies from other Norfolk parishes held in the Dean and Chapter's Library at Norwich Cathedral has revealed many signs of wear, use and marking strategies that belie these earlier assessments that judged their impact on parish life to be negligible. Instead, the marking strategies that are apparent provide evidence that they were used in a variety of ways and in more than one period. These have been recorded and photographed as evidence that the *Paraphrases* were active agents of conformity in Norfolk parishes. However, these markings also point to the paradox of commending a liberal Catholic theology that was still considered to be valid in the evangelical Church of England to parochial audiences. In one sense, official injunctions to study the gospels and Acts of the Apostles through the filter of Erasmus's *Paraphrases* appears to endorse theological pluralism in an increasingly Calvinist climate during the Elizabethan period.

The *Paraphrases* as an official publication.

The publication of the two volumes and two editions of the English *Paraphrases* spans the reign of Edward VI. The new king's printers, Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch, hurriedly produced the first edition of volume one, containing Erasmus's paraphrases of the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, with accompanying dedications and prefaces. The publication was dated of the last day of January, 1548. A second volume, containing Erasmus's paraphrases on the New Testament letters and Leo Jud's paraphrase on the Revelation of John, was published soon after. However, it was never an object of official injunction and therefore much less commonly found in parish libraries.

Both volumes of the first edition of the Whitchurch publication of Erasmus's *Paraphrases* in English are catalogued in the *Historical catalogue of printed editions of the English Bible* as Herbert 72. There are five variant issues of the first edition. The second edition, published by Grafton and Whitchurch in 1552 is listed as Herbert 73.<sup>64</sup> A much smaller number of surviving volumes of the English *Paraphrases* belong to the second edition. It may be that many of the parishes that intended to comply with the Injunction had already done so. It is even more likely that Edward VI's death in 1553 curtailed their purchase altogether.

Rather than use its full title, I will refer to volume one of Erasmus's tome as the *Paraphrases* throughout this chapter. This was the title used during the period with a variety of spellings in official injunctions, articles and accounts. Use of Erasmus's second volume, as mentioned previously, was not mandatory and did not appear in any of the parishes included in this study.

The Ranworth copy of *The first tome or volume of the Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the newe testament* belongs to the first edition and was rediscovered in the Priest's Room at St Helen's Church, Ranworth by researchers for Richard Taylor's BBC series 'How to

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<sup>64</sup> *Historical Catalogue of Printed Editions of the English Bible: 1525-1961*, ed. by Arthur Sumner Herbert and others, ([n.p]: British & Foreign Bible Society, 1968), pp. 38–40.

Read Churches' in 2011.<sup>65</sup> Michael Perkin's definitive *Directory of Parochial Libraries* lists it as having gone missing before 1950. In reality, it had simply lain ever deeper in the dust.<sup>66</sup> The delighted BBC researchers forbade anyone to remove the dust, enabling Taylor to blow it off towards the camera. This moment of televisual drama perhaps unintentionally but symbolically reflected an academic consensus that the *Paraphrases* were overlooked without ever being explored by their intended audience.

However, close attention to the wording of the injunctions and articles that required every parish and collegiate church to possess a copy of the *Paraphrases* reveals that a central place and purpose was intended for it within English church life. However, memory of the *Paraphrases* has faded and been overlooked in many studies of the Reformation era English parish. Until recently, their impact has been little understood and largely disputed. The general lack of references to the English *Paraphrases'* usage in primary sources led many scholars to believe that their readership and influence was negligible. In the absence of documentary evidence on its parochial use, the Reformation historian Felicity Heal writes 'as an educational tool for the laity there is a deafening silence about its impact.'<sup>67</sup> The literary scholar E.J. Devereux argued that 'the English *Paraphrases* of Erasmus ultimately had only slight influence on Anglican thought,' adding that 'books on public lecterns have limited lives, as can be seen from the gnawed margins and scribbled pages of many extant copies.'<sup>68</sup> In other words, not only were the *Paraphrases* neglected, they appear to have been vandalised.

For centuries, church historians viewed the *Paraphrases'* impact as negligible. However, whilst regular use of the *Homilies* throughout this period and sometimes into the eighteenth century has been generally acknowledged, the importance of the *Paraphrases* has generally been doubted by historians. In the early nineteenth century, the Whig historian Henry Hallam did not seek 'to disturb the slumbers of forgotten folios' such as

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<sup>65</sup> *How to read churches*, BBC 4, < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00tnp8f>>, [accessed 8 November 2015].

<sup>66</sup> *A Directory of Parochial Libraries of the Church of England and the Church in Wales*, ed. by Neil Kerr, rev. by Michael Perkin, (Cambridge: London Bibliographical Society, 2004), p. x.

<sup>67</sup> Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005), p. 297.

<sup>68</sup> E.J. Devereux, 'The Publication of the English *Paraphrases* of Erasmus', *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, (1967), 348-67 (pp. 367, 362).

the *Paraphrases*. Hallam praised the quality of Erasmus's Biblical interpretation, which was 'not satisfactory to the violent of either party' and believed it was 'probable, or rather obviously certain, that this order [the 1547 Injunction that required it] was not complied with.'<sup>69</sup> The Anglo-Catholic theologian Aubrey Moore saw it primarily as a humanist text: 'The Book itself used the New Testament as a covert religious satire in favour of the New Learning.' He added, 'it did not agree with the *Homilies*.'<sup>70</sup> This theological dissonance between the two new books imposed on English churches had also been noticed at the time of their publication. The implications of their contradictions, using the example of the issue of humanity's free will and ability to choose salvation and Erasmus's sacramental teaching will be explored later in this chapter.

However, this long historiographical consensus is currently contested by two early modern historians, John Craig and Gregory Dodds. Dodds devotes the first two chapters of his exploration of Erasmus's legacy in Early Modern England to the English *Paraphrases*. Dodds argues that this legacy 'contained imitation, praise, manipulation, and approbation of Erasmus', providing insights into a complex religious culture.<sup>71</sup> The title of his opening chapter, 'The Englishing of the *Paraphrases*' indicates that much more than translation was involved in the production of his New Testament writings into the vernacular. Erasmus's work would be embedded by highly-partisan translators' prefaces into a particular historical narrative that justified the Church of England's genesis. Within this narrative framework, Erasmus posthumously became a leading advocate for English evangelical reform.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Henry Hallam, *Introduction to the literature of Europe, in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries*, 4 vols (London: Murray, 1847), I, pp. 372-73. Tim Lang, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (online edn, January 2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/article/12002?docPos=2>>, [accessed 8 November 2016].

<sup>70</sup> Aubrey L. Moore, *Lectures and Papers on the History of the Reformation in England and on the Continent* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1890), p. 170. Cited in *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 118.

<sup>71</sup> Gregory H. Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus: The Erasmian Legacy and Religious Change in Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2009), pp. 267, 266.

<sup>72</sup> John Craig, 'Forming a Protestant Consciousness? Erasmus' *Paraphrases* in English Parishes, 1547-1666', in *Holy Scripture Speaks: The Production and Reception of*

Craig presents evidence of the *Paraphrases*' use, including para-liturgical use in parochial and collegiate contexts as an occasional substitute for the *Homilies*. Craig argues that what he describes as the 'Protestant' Erasmus was present in a wide range of parishes, raising important questions around the formation of new forms of consciousness and approaches to ecclesiological and moral issues.<sup>73</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to add a further hermeneutical layer to this analysis by considering the internal evidence of use within individual volumes.

The early modern English literature scholar and book historian Adam Smyth has drawn attention to the materiality of books, including their imperfections and ways in which their format, dimensions, typography and even imperfections act 'as signs that shape the meaning of the text, alongside the linguistic or literary content'.<sup>74</sup> The significance of the *Paraphrases*' production, physical appearance as a public display object and use of different typefaces will be explored in relation to the volume's period reception. Since Devereux's negative assessment of markings and damage to surviving copies of the *Paraphrases* as human or animal damage, the English literature scholar William Sherman has observed growing academic interest in such markings as textual enrichments rather than wanton damage. This stems from Stoddard's exhibition catalogue, *Marks in Books, Illustrated and explained*, published in 1985.<sup>75</sup> Eamon Duffy's *Marking the Hours* (2006) applied this new and insightful means of inquiry into reception and reflection to the devotional lives of English book owners and users between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Duffy's study of Books of Hours and Primers included consideration not just of devotional responses, but also changing use during Protestant and Catholic reigns.<sup>76</sup> It is intended that this chapter will extend the scope of these investigations by considering blind, that is, uncoloured markings made

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*Erasmus' Paraphrases on the New Testament*, ed. by Hilmar M. Pabel and Mark Vessey, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002), pp. 316-60 (p. 322).

<sup>73</sup> Craig, 'Forming a Protestant Consciousness?' in *Holy Scripture Speaks*, ed. by Pabel and Vessey, pp. 335-36.

<sup>74</sup> Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2018), p. 10.

<sup>75</sup> Roger Stoddard, *Marks in Books, Illustrated and explained*, (Harvard: Harvard University, 1985), cited by William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008), p. xi.

<sup>76</sup> Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers 1240-1570*, (London: Yale University, 2011), pp. 147-70.

without ink or pigments that have parallels with mural graffiti in English churches. The latter is a burgeoning area of study, in which a number of county surveys are being undertaken, including Norfolk.<sup>77</sup>

The methodology employed in this chapter is based on the positive re-assessment by recent scholars of damage and markings in medieval and early modern texts. It is based on examination of the Ranworth copy of Erasmus's *Paraphrases* in association with nine other copies held by the Dean and Chapter Library at Norwich Cathedral (Plate I). A gazetteer of these volumes appears as Appendix I. In the absence of other sources, comparative examination of the Ranworth *Paraphrases* with other copies from Norfolk parishes for signs of wear, use, marking and abuse transform these volumes into self-referential texts, allowing patterns to emerge. This investigation will cast fresh light on prevailing views on the *Paraphrases*. The growth of academic attention to markings and graffiti has enabled a greater sense if not a complete understanding of ways in which owners and users responded to and interacted with printed texts. Sometimes personal preoccupations may appear through patterns of interaction with the text, such as by repeated use of a particular form of manicule, but they are almost always anonymous. Nevertheless, they are important because they bring the reader closer to an otherwise inaccessible inner devotional world of ordinary Norfolk believers.

#### Physical analysis of the Ranworth and Dean and Chapter's volumes.

I measured the sizes of different volumes, and although their overall dimensions vary due to the range or absence of bindings, the most salient differences are due to the larger leaf size of the 1552 edition copies from Ashby St Mary, Hethersett and Weston Longville, (H 191mm x W 279mm in 1548 edition, compared with H 199mm x W 313mm in the later edition). The markings of each volume have been recorded and photographed in many cases. Their location on leaves and proximity to printed text of Bible verses or

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<sup>77</sup> See Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey, < <http://www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk/>>, [accessed 4 July 2018].

paraphrases has been noted, and marks have been categorised as follows: ink, smudge, splatter, blind (pigment-free), inscriptions, words, letters, symbols and lines.

Watermarks have also been recorded and photographed where visible. These marks are generally obliterated by the density of text on printed leaves, and blank leaves have largely been removed, presumably for their value as notepaper. A small number of watermarks are visible within each volume of the 1548 edition, generally in the more sparsely printed ends to prefaces and Jerome's lives of the evangelists. These have been researched on watermark databases, particularly the Thomas L. Gravell watermark collection. There are general similarities, for example between the cross-topped flagon used in the Ranworth copy and a glove decorated with initials and a *fleur-de-lys* in the Colegate volume, but no direct matches. These types of marks were used over many years, so it has not been possible to identify their source. The more economical use of paper in the 1552 edition means that no complete watermarks are visible.

In common with the six first edition copies deposited at the Dean and Chapter Library, the Ranworth copy is missing its dated frontispiece.<sup>78</sup> However, this group can nevertheless be identified for the following reasons. First, the leaf size is smaller than in the later edition. Each of the Biblical books it contains has discrete folio numbering systems and the prefaces and additional pages are not numbered, whilst the 1552 edition's folios are sequentially numbered and conclude with a thematic index written by Nicholas Udall, translator and overall editor. I shall use the name of each copy and Biblical book, for example 'Ranworth copy, Matthew fol.15<sup>r</sup>.' to differentiate between different paginations. With one notable exception, the marginal notes contain quotations from the text being paraphrased or cross-references with other Biblical texts. In contrast, the enlarged second edition explicitly identifies passages with new teachings by means of a heavily evangelical gloss. Although the Ranworth copy would have borne the standard 'the last date of januarie. *Anno Domini*.1548', it could have been produced in any one of an estimated four or five printings prior to the publication of the second edition. From the

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<sup>78</sup> The 1548 edition volumes studied were parochial copies from Bacton, Carbrooke, Guist, Norwich St George Colegate, Paston, Ranworth and Shipdham.

foliation errors in the paraphrases on Matthew and Luke it can be identified as the version catalogued as ESTC S107049.<sup>79</sup>

Unlike the Elizabethan communion cups which have become worn, repaired and reshaped through centuries of continuous use, the *Paraphrases* have often been damaged by poor storage but have retained more of their original features. The book historian Brian Cummings observes that any domestic object is likely to take on the imprint of both producer and user, but ‘old books have further value as containing the presence of many other readers in the past [...] to embody not only a physical memory but also a record of past thoughts.’ Thus, the book contains both author and reader.<sup>80</sup> Some of the volumes also contained fragments of readers’ food, cats’ footprints, hair and insects they had flattened when closing the book. These provided a surprising but profound sense of the humanity of the *Paraphrases*’ early readers. More significantly for the purpose of this thesis, they marked passages in a wide variety of ways, leaving tangible trails through their reading. These offer potentially unique insights into the interests and preoccupations of literate early modern English Christians.

I wish to argue that physical analysis of these volumes’ condition and markings reveal interactions with their text, enabling a reassessment of the parochial impact of the sixteenth-century Church of England’s only authorised Biblical commentary. This methodology will reveal personal and group responses to the officially imposed *Paraphrases* and the visual and material aspects of their production, and also early modern attitudes to books described by the Renaissance cultural and literary historian György E. Szönyi as ‘dialogical objects.’ They were capable of accommodating responses to their text, an acceptable practice in an age in which the didactic expression ‘mark my words’ was physical as well as intellectual.<sup>81</sup> The methodologies used in this chapter aim to identify and analyse, however speculative any conclusions may be, interactions between Erasmus and the New Testament authors on one hand and the early modern readership and their confessional and inner lives on the other.

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<sup>79</sup> Devereux, ‘Publication of the English *Paraphrases*’, 346-87 (p. 356).

<sup>80</sup> Brian Cummings, ‘The Book as Symbol’, in *The Book: A Global History*, ed. by Michael F. Suarez and H.R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013), p. 93.

<sup>81</sup> György E. Szönyi, Review: ‘W.H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*,’ *Renaissance Quarterly*, 61, 4 (Winter 2008), 1358-60 (p. 1358).



The nine Dean and Chapter volumes come from the parishes of Ashby St Mary, Bacton, Paston, Guist, Hethersett, Colegate St George, Weston Longville, Carbrooke, and Shipdham. The copies of the *Paraphrases* examined in this study are almost entirely from rural communities, served by a range of clergy from those whose incumbency predated Henry VIII's break with Rome to those who had been ordained subsequently. Many of them had monastic connections including patronage that had been severed at the dissolution in the previous decade. These generally ancient connections had ended abruptly but were still present in parishioners' memories. Since then such patronages had been seized by the crown and frequently redistributed locally to gentry families.

Given that one of the generally accepted aims of the *Paraphrases*' introduction had been to provide clergy with some Biblical instruction, it is noteworthy that copies were in use in at least three parishes in this sample that had graduate clergy as incumbents. However, it may be that wealthier parishes like Shipdham would have been held in plurality and been served by less-educated stipendiary curates.

The English *Paraphrases* within the context of royal reform.

Unlike the Book of Common Prayer which is still in wide circulation and therefore relatively well known, the fading of the *Paraphrases*' use over two centuries ago has rendered it unfamiliar even to a general scholarly audience. In order to understand the persistence of his *Paraphrases* into the middle of the seventeenth century, it is necessary to begin with their author's status. In the sixteenth century and for some time afterwards, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam was Europe's most famous and celebrated scholar. His reputation was particularly strong in England, where he had lived during two periods of his academic career and enjoyed Henry VIII's patronage. This endorsement commended his religious writings to a wide English audience, and his humanist theology emphasising an ethical, conformist faith and reconciliation between Christians commended him to English authorities. Erasmus's *Philosophia Christi* has been described by MacCulloch as a whitewashed, stripped down version of medieval spirituality, a metaphor redolent of

the partially reformed interiors of Edwardian churches.<sup>82</sup> For example, he commended lay meditation upon Christ's cross but not 'in the commune manner as some men repete dayly the history of the passion of Chryst or honour the ymage of the crosse.' Such things were only acceptable to 'be the mylke of ye soules, which be yongelynges and weyke in Chryst.'<sup>83</sup>

However, the latitude of Erasmus's philosophical faith expounded in his paraphrases would be severely restricted in their new Church of England presentation. For Erasmus, devotional images had simply become *adiaphora*, matters of theological indifference to the beholder's salvation. Those who embraced the *philosophia Christi* would joyfully leave them behind. However, in Edwardian England, discarding images became both mandatory and crucial for salvation. The English translation of Erasmus's *Paraphrases* had taken place discreetly during the last years of Henry VIII's reign, under the moderate evangelical patronage of Queen Katherine Parr, involving the courtier, playwright and disgraced former Master of Eton, Nicholas Udall, the humanist scholar Thomas Key and Princess Mary.<sup>84</sup> This royal collaboration included Catholic Mary in an evangelical project that could not be published in the conservative atmosphere of Henry VIII's later years, but found favour with his son's regent, the Duke of Somerset.<sup>85</sup>

Despite his scholarly popularity, the question why Erasmus should appear as the Church of England's normative authority over thirty years after the first publication of his Latin *Paraphrases* requires some explanation.<sup>86</sup> However, during the 1530s, Richard Taverner, Clerk of the Privy Seal under Cromwell's patronage, translated Erasmus's *Proverbes and Adages* into English. Although these books did not deal directly with religious issues, Taverner added a conservative evangelical gloss that advocated Erasmus as proponent of a reformed middle way between the erroneous positions of papists and Lutherans. In his

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<sup>82</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (London: Viking, 2004).

<sup>83</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Enchiridion Militis Christiani* (*English translation of 1534*) ed. by A.M. O'Donnell (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1981), p. 178.

<sup>84</sup> Devereux, 'Publication of the English *Paraphrases*', 346-87 (pp. 351-53).

<sup>85</sup> Devereux, 'Publication of the English *Paraphrases*', 346-87 (p. 354).

<sup>86</sup> Erasmus's paraphrases of the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were published separately by Johann Froben of Basel, beginning with Matthew in 1522 and ending with Acts in 1524. See R.A.B. Mynors, 'The Publication of the *Paraphrases*', in *New Testament Scholarship: Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians*, (*Collected Works of Erasmus*), ed. by Robert D. Sider (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1984), pp. xx-xxix.

*Second booke of the Garden of wysedome*, partly plagiarised from Erasmus, Taverner commended reason and simplicity against those ‘we call Pharisees [...] we defye as naughtye papistes [...] Agayne other some [...] we call Lutheranes, and all that naught is.’<sup>87</sup> These works remained in publication until 1569, familiarising English readers with a mental image of Erasmus as Henrician reformer. Henry’s death meant that rather than attach religious polemic to an oblique subject, Erasmus’s authority could be brought to bear directly on the interpretation of scripture to a vernacular audience. Udall’s assessment of Erasmus, expressed in his translator’s preface, dovetailed neatly into Taverner’s.

The moderating purpose of the first volume of Erasmus’s *Paraphrases* is highly evident in Udall’s preface, dedicated to Queen Katherine Parr. As humanist and reformer, Erasmus was already known to an English audience for his satirical attacks on the excesses of the papacy. Whether or not he penned the satirical *Pope Julius Barred from Heaven*, it was widely believed that he did.<sup>88</sup> Equally importantly, his published dispute with Luther over the position of free will in relation to salvation established him among Luther’s public adversaries. For the authorities of reformed England, Erasmus’s anti-Lutheran credentials were as important as his proto-evangelical ones.

Margaret Ford’s survey of English private ownership of printed books before 1557 places the Latin *Paraphrases* high in terms of prevalence, suggesting that they were a university set-text, just as other sets of paraphrases had been during the Middle Ages.<sup>89</sup> Their vernacular translation was intended to widen the audience to those who could only understand English.

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<sup>87</sup> Robert Taverner, *Second booke of the Garden of wysedome*, sigs. B8-C1, cited in John K. Yost’s ‘Taverner’s use of Erasmus and the Protestantization of English Humanism’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 23, 3 (Autumn 1970), 266-76 (p. 275).

<sup>88</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *A Diatribe or Sermon concerning Free Will*, (1524), in Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther, *Discourse on Free Will*, ed. by Ernest F. Winter (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 3-87.

<sup>89</sup> Margaret Lane Ford, ‘Private ownership of printed books’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999), III, pp. 203-28 (p. 220). Erasmus is listed in fifth place, after St. Augustine, Aristotle, Cicero and Duns Scotus respectively. Erasmus’s works appearing in personal inventories were largely his *Annotationes* on Valla’s New Testament writings and the *Paraphrases*.

Although Erasmus spiced his rhetoric with erudition, his paraphrases are often homely and conversational, enlivening Biblical passages and earthing them in the experiential world of his sixteenth-century audience. ‘What we talk about each day,’ he wrote, ‘largely makes us who we are.’<sup>90</sup> However, after his death, Erasmus became someone else to his English audience. He gained an evangelical identity, promoted by his English editors in order to deploy the *Paraphrases* in the re-shaping of the Church along new lines. In order to achieve this, Dodds highlights the extent to which these writers ‘shaped, transformed and reinterpreted him and his works [...] we must step outside of his texts and examine the subtexts of meaning provided by those who he decided could be useful.’<sup>91</sup>

Rather than simply present Erasmus’s *Paraphrases* to a vernacular audience, Udall’s dedication and the translators’ prefaces reveal how Erasmus was intended to serve the evangelical Church of England’s new trajectory. In his dedication to Edward VI, Udall’s adulation of the boy-king and his father is laced with allegorical comparisons derived from the Bible and classical literature. Henry VIII is likened to Philip of Macedon, Hercules, Cyrus King of Persia, who ended the Israelites’ captivity in Babylon, King David, Archangel Michael and Moses. Udall compares Moses’ experience of living in the wilderness with Henry’s geographical isolation from other evangelical princes. Edward was likened to other illustrious offspring, Philip’s son Alexander the Great and David’s son King Solomon. He was compared to a phoenix rising from the ashes and most characteristically, King Josiah.<sup>92</sup> This allusion to the iconoclastic boy-king of Judah who restored the Law of Moses and reformed Temple worship was first used by Cranmer in Edward’s coronation sermon:

Your majesty is God’s vice-gerent and Christ’s vicar within your own dominions, and to see with your predecessor Josiah, God truly worshipped, and idolatry destroyed, the tyranny of the bishops of Rome banished from your subjects, and

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<sup>90</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, trans. by Roger Clarke (Croydon: Alma Classics, 2008), p. 267.

<sup>91</sup> Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> See 2 Kings 22-3.

images removed. These acts be signs of a second Josiah, who reformed the church of God in his days.<sup>93</sup>

The example of Josiah used by Cranmer to set out a reformist agenda would be used throughout Edward's reign and feature in other prefaces in the *Paraphrases*. In contrast, religious orders and the papacy are characterised by Udall as the Antichrist, and popes as the Babylonian oppressor of Israel, King Nebuchednezzar, Pharaoh and Egypt, the land of slavery, the Red Sea that stood between the Israelites and their freedom, the Beast and Harlot of Babylon from the Apocalypse, and the classical monster, Hydra.<sup>94</sup> In an additional postscript to the 1552 edition, Udall rammed home Erasmus's peerless doctrinal orthodoxy: 'Neither doth any manne espie his places, or more readely take his occasions plainly to expresse anypoint or article of our religion.' In an almost litany-like exposition of his virtues, each section beginning, 'no man [...]', could better express Christ's true nature, justification by faith, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, use of ceremonies, the evils of idolatry and superstition, tyranny of the 'Romish Babilon', right obedience to kings and magistrates, and learning in the scriptures. In these and a thousand other points, Udall argues, Erasmus was 'chief leader and showere of light.'<sup>95</sup>

Udall hails Erasmus as critic and satirist of the papacy, adding contentiously that Erasmus made disguised criticism in his paraphrase of Mark 11. The marginal note in question 'The bishop of Romes pope is covertly here described' is in relation to Mark 11.1-8. Contrasting Jesus' humble entry to Jerusalem on a colt, Erasmus rails against the pomp surrounding 'one byshop of one temple.' Whilst he explicitly identifies the corrupt and ostentatious figure with the Jewish high priesthood, Udall makes an allegorical connection with the trappings of the papacy that is plausible whilst remaining subjective.<sup>96</sup> Comparisons between the Jewish priestly elite and the Catholic hierarchy made several appearances in Protestant rhetoric.

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<sup>93</sup> *Works of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. by J.E. Cox, 2 vols (London: Parker Society, 1846), II, pp. 126-27.

<sup>94</sup> 1 John 2.18, 2 Kings 24, Exodus 1, 5-14, Exodus 13.17-14.30, Revelation 13,18.

<sup>95</sup> Nicholas Udall, Untitled Postscript to Erasmus's Preface to Matthew's gospel, in Bacton copy, last fol.<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> Ranworth copy, Mark fol.71<sup>r</sup>.

Of longer significance than Udall's assessment of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Erasmus are his allegorical references to the Church of England, which he referred to as the bride of Christ and the true Israel, delivered from slavery in Egypt. English clergy were like the Levites in the Jerusalem Temple and they needed to learn how to serve the Lord properly. Udall's interpretation of recent history is an early example of what the Early Modern historian David Cressy describes as the sixteenth-century Church of England's 'myth of historical exceptionalism.' This self-image of a distinctive national church with an Old Testament destiny, blessed by Providence and dynastic security was not unique to England. However, by the end of the century this consciousness would develop into a unique sense of identity, bolstered by new celebrations of deliverance from Catholic bondage.<sup>97</sup>

Although the English translation of his *Paraphrases* would be given an extensive evangelical gloss in the 1552 edition, this was, like the revised Prayer Book liturgy of similar date, simply an incremental step on a theological journey that was clearly set out in the dedication and prefaces of the first edition. Udall's preface posthumously co-opts Erasmus to anti-papal evangelicalism. Udall declared that

whoso wincheth and kiketh at the gospel, in dede cannot but spurne at Erasmus [...] And truly whomsoever I perceive to bee an eager adversarie to Erasmus writings, I (as my poore judgements leadeth me) cannot but suppose the same to be an indurate enemie to the ghospel.<sup>98</sup>

Using a New Testament metaphor for spiritual nourishment, Udall described the *Paraphrases* as containing 'both pappe for younglynges in the feith [...] and also sounde meate for such as are well entred.'<sup>99</sup> In contrast, Udall argues from a predestinarian perspective that the good food found in the *Paraphrases* would merely aggravate spiritually diseased opponents of the gospel. In an argument tending towards

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<sup>97</sup> David Cressy, 'The Protestant Calendar and the Vocabulary of Celebration in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 29, 1 (January 1990), 31-52 (pp. 31-2).

<sup>98</sup> Udall, Untitled Preface to Erasmus's Paraphrase of Matthew's Gospel in Bacton copy, 2<sup>nd</sup> fol.<sup>v & r</sup>.

<sup>99</sup> Hebrews 5.13-4. Udall, Untitled Preface to Erasmus's Paraphrases, in Bacton copy, 1<sup>st</sup> fol.<sup>v & r</sup>.

predestination, he asserts that ‘a cankerd stomake and a wicked herte, the more holesome the doctrine that is ministered unto it, the more it is indurate.’<sup>100</sup>

The *Paraphrases* and *Homilies* were intended to be physically present in parish churches and accessible to clergy at least. The first book of twelve homilies, written mainly by Cranmer, was published by Richard Grafton in 1547, ahead of the ban on unlicensed preaching enacted on 23 September 1548.<sup>101</sup> These homilies expounded themes of Christian living and a reformed doctrine of salvation, with little reference to the seasons and festivals of the Church’s calendar and no sacramental teaching. These would not be supplemented until 1563, when a second book of homilies, chiefly the work of Bishop Jewel, was published. The new volume addressed issues of the sacraments and church buildings, denounced idolatry and rebellion at length, and provided sermons for major festivals. However, even with these additions, it will be observed later how thematic and seasonal *lacunae* were discretely addressed with the aid of the *Paraphrases*.

In a similar manner to the Norwich goldsmiths, the royal printers had a confessional as well as commercial investment in their work. Whitchurch and Grafton had published the first Great Bible under Cromwell’s patronage and were subsequently imprisoned after his downfall. Whitchurch would later marry Thomas Cranmer’s widow.<sup>102</sup> Whitchurch was also responsible for the publication of the first book of *Homilies*.<sup>103</sup> The *Homilies* were intended to bring officially sanctioned teaching into many parishes who lacked licensed preachers. The contradictions between *Homilies* and *Paraphrases* had been recognised by the conservative Bishop Stephen Gardiner even before the latter’s publication.

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<sup>100</sup> Udall, Untitled Preface to Erasmus’s Paraphrase of Matthew’s Gospel in Bacton copy, 2<sup>nd</sup> fol. V.

<sup>101</sup> Pamela Neville-Sington, ‘Press, politics and religion’, in *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, III, pp. 576-607 (p. 600).

<sup>102</sup> Alec Ryrie, ‘Whitchurch, Edward’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (online edn, Jan. 2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/article/29233?docPos=1>>, [accessed 8 November 2016].

<sup>103</sup> *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches, in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of famous memory: and Now thought fit to be Reprinted by Authority from the Kings most Excellent Majesty* (London: T.R, 1673).

Gardiner, who was critical of both volumes, wrote a letter to the Lord Protector, on 14 October 1547, pointing out that ‘Theis books stryve one against another dyrectlye.’<sup>104</sup>

These inherent contradictions make the official promotion of Erasmus’s Biblical writings appear as a remarkable feature in the character of English evangelicalism. By imposing the *Paraphrases* onto the Church of England, Erasmus’s presence in most parishes made him *de facto* interpreter of Jesus’ life and ministry and the early Church as portrayed in the Gospels and Acts. This would also have provided access to a Catholic humanist perspective on free will that stood in contradiction with the formularies of the Church’s Forty-two Articles published in 1553, restated as Thirty-Nine Articles in 1563. Erasmus had defended a Catholic concept of free will in his polemical debate with Luther on the subject of free will.<sup>105</sup> Although the Church of England’s first doctrinal affirmation of predestination post-dated the publication of the *Paraphrases*’ first edition by five years, MacCulloch observes that Cranmer had rejected Erasmus’s free will teachings and become a convinced predestinarian long before Edward VI’s accession. As the first copies of the *Paraphrases* were being distributed across England in 1549, Cranmer began to draft the Forty-Two Articles.<sup>106</sup> Cranmer’s article on free will stated that humanity’s condition after Adam’s fall left Man unable to turn to God in faith or perform good works without the agency of God’s grace.<sup>107</sup>

However, it is also important to note the flexibility of Erasmus’s thought and the gradual refinement of his position on free will over the following decade. Dodds observes that in Erasmus’s 1532 edition of his paraphrase on St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans he used predestinarian language to engage with his Protestant audience, without explicitly using

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<sup>104</sup> *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. by J.A. Muller (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1933), no. 133.

<sup>105</sup> Erasmus, *Discourse on Free Will*.

<sup>106</sup> MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, p. 211.

<sup>107</sup> Article Ten of the Thirty-Nine Articles retained the sense of article seventeen of the Forty-Two Articles, whilst softening its language. Article Seventeen stated: ‘Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed, by his own judgement, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen out of mankind; and to bring them to everlasting salvation by Christ, as vessels made to honour.’ *The Two Liturgies, A.D. 1549, and A.D. 1552; with other Documents Set Forth by Authority in the Reign of King Edward VI*, ed. by Joseph Ketley (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1844), p. 530.



the word predestination. This version was used by Udall in his English translation. Erasmus was no longer expressing human free will as an absolute certainty, because he found the testimony of scripture tended towards ambiguity.<sup>108</sup> For this reason, he presented free will and predestination as being *adiaphora*, a rational position that would be seen as dangerously wrong to committed Calvinists. This ambiguity would become embedded in English parishes in the *Paraphrases*’ text.

It is evident from signs of use and markings in the examined copies of the *Paraphrases* that proof texts used by Erasmus in his polemical battle with Luther were clearly picked over in Norfolk parishes, as markings in their *Paraphrases* attest. For example, Erasmus’s opening proof text against Luther is Matthew 23.37, when Jesus weeps over Jerusalem for its disastrous choices. Erasmus paraphrases Jesus’ words as

Nothing is let passe on my behaulfe, whereby thou mightiest be saved, but contrary wyse thou hast done what thou canst to bring destruction to the[e], and to exclude salvation from the[e]. But to whome free wyl is geven, he can not be saved agaynst his wyl.<sup>109</sup>

Markings appear in the Ranworth and Paston copies adjacent to this particular paraphrase.

The persistence of belief in freedom of choice as a means towards salvation was problematic for the Edwardian Church. On one hand, Erasmus’s teachings in print offered a continuing Catholic perspective, and on the other ‘Freewillers’ emerged as a small sect in Essex and Kent before their unofficial meetings or conventicles were suppressed in 1549.<sup>110</sup> Although they were active below Norwich Diocese’s southern boundary on the Essex-Suffolk border, knowledge of their beliefs elsewhere cannot be discounted. The Freewillers’ leaders continued to dispute the doctrine of predestination with more conventional evangelical divines, and although they were incarcerated in Mary’s reign, early modern historian Tom Freeman suggests that Freewillers’ executions

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<sup>108</sup> Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, p. 53.

<sup>109</sup> Ranworth copy, Matthew fol. 83<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>110</sup> O.T. Hargrave, ‘The Freewillers in the English Reformation’, *Church History*, 37, 3 (September 1968), 271-80 (pp. 271-72).

were continually postponed so that they could continue to fight polemical battles with more conventional Protestant prisoners, who were committed to the doctrine of predestination.<sup>111</sup> Although they have sometimes been compared to Continental Anabaptists, the Reformation historian Andrew Penny argues for the possibility that they were influenced by the newly introduced *Paraphrases*.<sup>112</sup> Penny argues that Erasmus's paraphrasing is broadly compatible with the arguments for universal grace and unfettered free will that he used in debate with Luther. The *Paraphrases* were certainly present in local churches near the Freewillers' South Eastern epicentres during the Edwardian period. The Freewillers' polemical writings did not cite Erasmus, whose mild rhetoric contrasted with their angry and provocative outbursts, but followed very similar lines on the issue of free will.<sup>113</sup> For a typical example, John Trewe, a leading Freewiller, argued that Christ's atoning death on the cross was intended for all who have faith in Jesus, rather than a predestined selection of humanity.<sup>114</sup> Elsewhere, Richard Cheyney, Bishop of Gloucester declared in 1568, 'Luther wrote a very ill book against *free* will [his italics]; wherein he did much hurt. But Erasmus answered him learnedly. I am not of Luther's opinion therein, but of Erasmus' mind.'<sup>115</sup> Cheyney was an isolated figure within the House of Bishops, but his views may have been held more quietly by other clergy and laity.<sup>116</sup> Within the underlined passage of John 3 in the Ranworth copy, Erasmus declares

there is geven to all folks an easie entrie to salvation. For satisfaction of the fautes committed before, is not required, neyther yet observation of the law, nor circumcision: onely he that belyveth in him shall not be condemned [period underlinings.]<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Thomas Freeman, 'Dissenters from a dissenting Church: the challenge of the Freewillers 1550-1558', in *The Beginnings of English Protestantism*, ed. by Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002), pp. 129-57.

<sup>112</sup> Andrew Penny, *Freewill or Predestination: The Battle over Saving Grace in Mid-Tudor England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 86-102.

<sup>113</sup> Penny, *Freewill or Predestination*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>114</sup> Hargrave, 'The Freewillers in the English Reformation', p. 277.

<sup>115</sup> Preserved Smith, 'English opinion of Luther', *Harvard Theological Review*, 10, 2 (April 1917), p. 137.

<sup>116</sup> 'Richard Cheyney', < [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Cheyney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Cheyney) >, [accessed 1 February 2017].

<sup>117</sup> Ranworth copy, John fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

Whilst Erasmus' rejection of satisfaction or penance leading to salvation was consistent with Protestant soteriology, his 'easie entrie to salvation' for all appears to contradict predestinarian arguments. Evidently, Erasmus' teaching on free will was being read, marked and presumably inwardly digested in Ranworth.

Given the contentions among evangelicals caused by the Freewillers' position, it is perhaps surprising that Erasmus' views were welcomed back into the midst of parish churches after Elizabeth I's accession. However, the *Paraphrases* reflected their author's theological flexibility and could be drawn from in more ways than one. Even Erasmus could be deployed to support predestination. In John 1.43-51, Philip's encounter with Jesus that led to his calling as a disciple may have appeared to have been accidental, but Erasmus wrote that 'the very thyng in dede was doen altogether by the providence of God'.<sup>118</sup> This phrase has been underlined in the Bacton copy. Providence was a Calvinist keyword, and this may have attracted the reader. It may also have demonstrated Erasmus's harmony with other parochial texts such as the *Homilies*.

The total number of volumes printed in the two editions is unknown, but Devereux estimates 20-30,000 copies, based on a cost estimate given by Bishop Gardiner.<sup>119</sup> This suggests a wider circulation beyond just the parochial clergy, who served in roughly just 9,000 parishes. It may have originally related to the large number of chantry priests, apparently intended by the Royal Injunctions of 31 July 1547 to be redeployed as teachers, a role that a number of them had already fulfilled. However, and perhaps unexpectedly, chantries would be abolished in November of that year. This evidence of the fluid and sometimes contradictory nature of the English Reformation in the early part of Edward VI's reign makes the persistence of the *Paraphrases* more remarkable.

Having considered the *Paraphrases*' introduction from the perspective of royal-led reform and central production, it is important to consider their regional reception within Norwich diocese. They were introduced into a highly febrile atmosphere in Norfolk, arguably during the period of the English Reformation's greatest transformation. They

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<sup>118</sup> Bacton copy, John fol. 10<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>119</sup> *Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, no.133. Devereux, pp. 363, 367. Devereux argued that Gardiner's hostile and presumably exaggerated estimate of £20,000 would have represented the total cost of printing, binding and carriage for 40,000 copies, and therefore proposed a reduced figure in the absence of further evidence.

were printed in the same year as Cranmer's first vernacular liturgy, *Order of the Communion* which would be followed in the next year by his complete *Book of Common Prayer*. As well as replacing the Sarum liturgy, the Prayer Book changed the rhythm of the year with a new, heavily pruned calendar of holy days. In 1552, the same year as the *Paraphrases* second edition was published, Royal Commissioners confiscated the material artefacts of traditional religion that had not been sold or hidden. The Ranworth inventory records the chalice and paten, pax bread that had formerly been used at the sharing of the peace at Masses, three bells, two tall latén candlesticks, two purple vestments, three copes, four tunics a cross cloth and gilt cross that would be removed.<sup>120</sup> Many of these would have been purchased for the church by pious donors or given as bequests. Duffy identifies the impact of these removals as damaging memory perhaps even more than liturgy:

For at least two centuries parishioners had worshipped in buildings which were a dense forest of reminders of the dead, and of their living kindred, and the organization of sacred space located the parishioner within a community that articulated itself through time as well as physical and social space. The parish church was a forum in which the parishioner's standing in the community could be perpetuated and recalled [...] After 1553 that would only be true of the very wealthy, who could afford a monumental tomb.<sup>121</sup>

This accumulated material culture of worship and memory was replaced by a small brace of books, *Common Prayer*, *Paraphrases* and *Homilies*, parochial objects purchased by parish functionaries, the churchwardens and clergy. The *Paraphrases*' appearance in Norwich diocese was followed a year or two later by a rigorous archiepiscopal visitation. MacCulloch observes that in February 1550 Thomas Cranmer took of Norwich's vacancy in see following Bishop Rugge's resignation in the aftermath of Kett's rebellion. He sent his trusted servants Rowland Taylor and William Wakefield to conduct a visitation on the 'unwilling and still very conservative clergy of the Norwich diocesan establishment.' On one hand, MacCulloch highlights the visitation articles' emphasis on expunging pre-Reformation practices that may have adhered to the 1549 Prayer Book

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<sup>120</sup> Morant and L'Estrange, 'Notices of the Church at Randworth', 178-211 (pp. 196-97).

<sup>121</sup> Duffy, *Saints, Sacrilege and Sedition*, p. 129.

rite, but also fears about Anabaptist sympathies in East Anglia following that year's unrest. Norwich 'became a guinea-pig for more general changes', including the swift, wholesale destruction of stone altars.<sup>122</sup> By the time Thomas Thirlby was instituted Bishop, this work had been largely undertaken. In a circular to his diocesan clergy in December 1550, Thirlby called for the destruction of all stone altars in compliance with the King and Council's order of the previous month, but remarked that most had already been taken down by order of Cranmer's commissioners.<sup>123</sup> MacCulloch observes that this would have predated Ridley's in London diocese by at least two months, making it England's first major campaign of smashing altars.<sup>124</sup> This pilot campaign in Norwich prefigures the beginnings of the cup replacement strategy in the 1560s.

Thirlby was a career diplomat and former evangelical who had been Cranmer's friend, but was rumoured to secretly oppose the new injunctions. However, he had been a skilful examiner of anabaptist heretics in 1538 and resumed this task in 1550. Thirlby's appointment in a diocese that had been a hotbed of Lollardy suggests that his skills at hunting down radical sectaries may have been considered an asset. At the other end of the religious spectrum, Princess Mary was becoming a visible focus for Catholic practices in her Kenninghall manor, openly holding masses.

The most dramatic event to have occurred locally during this period was Kett's rebellion in 1549. The rebel camp on Mousehold Heath was located only a few miles from Ranworth. Due to the power vacuum created by the Duke of Norfolk's imprisonment in December 1546, East Anglia's gentry were unable to make a concerted effort in the face of Kett's rebellion, but gradually began to consolidate a common position. Although most did not become recusants, they largely maintained conservative positions in religious matters. Later on, support by the East Anglian gentry would be crucial in securing Mary I's accession. Since the dissolution of the religious houses, many had become patrons of parish churches. Indeed, the patrons of the parishes with surviving copies of the *Paraphrases* reads like a roll call of the local gentry who opposed Kett. One

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<sup>122</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (London: Penguin, 2011), pp. 96-97.

<sup>123</sup> J. L'Estrange, 'The Church goods of St Andrew and St Mary Coslany in the City of Norwich', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 7, (1879), 45-78 (pp. 72-73).

<sup>124</sup> MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, p. 458.

notable example was Sir John Flowerdew, patron and parishioner of St. Remigius's Church in Hethersett. Flowerdew was a Serjeant at Law who gained notoriety for despoiling and partly demolishing Wymondham Abbey, despite parishioners' historic rights to use part of the building as the town's parish church. He was publicly opposed by Robert Kett. This animosity would find manifestation in Hethersett at the very beginning of the local uprising that would be remembered as Kett's rebellion. On 8 July 1549, the day after the abolished translation feast of the Abbey's patron St Thomas of Canterbury, Flowerdew's hedges enclosing common land at Hethersett were thrown down by angry villagers from the Wymondham area, under the leadership of Robert Kett.<sup>125</sup>

The historian Ethan Shagan notes that the Articles promulgated by the rebels in their camp on Mousehold Heath contained evangelical principles pressed into supporting their aims. Some Norfolk churchwardens also used parish funds to support the rebels. A Norwich minister was appointed by the rebel leaders to read Matins and Evensong from the new Prayer Book in the camp and some of the Cathedral's singing men sang the *Te Deum* canticle there in English. When the defeated rebels later accepted the King's pardon, they had to declare themselves 'for religion.'<sup>126</sup> After the rebellion's suppression, the authorities maintained an anxious vigilance for further stirrings. In 1551 James Stotter of Ranworth was summoned to the Norwich Quarter Sessions for remarking that 'suche as were slayn and dyd upon mushold in the comecon tyme were honest men', as was Robert Kett,<sup>127</sup> Given Erasmus's emphasis on Christians living peacefully together and submitting to authority, official interest in maintaining the *Paraphrases* in parish churches as an instrument of moderation and conformity is not entirely surprising.

During the Edwardian period, promotion of Erasmus as author became strongly associated with the evangelical cause as a whole. This promotion would end swiftly

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<sup>125</sup> Stephen K. Land, *Kett's Rebellion: The Norfolk Rising of 1549* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1977), pp. 22-24, 42-43.

The translation of St Thomas à Becket's relics from Canterbury Cathedral's crypt to a new shrine there in 1220 was observed in England until removed from the Sarum Calendar in 1538. The Sarum Calendar itself was abolished in 1549.

<sup>126</sup> Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003), pp. 282-83.

<sup>127</sup> Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre. NRO, NCR, 12A/1 (a), City Quarter Sessions, 1549-1553, fol. 31<sup>r</sup>. I am very grateful to James Watts for drawing my attention to this case.

within a year of the 1552 edition's publication, following Edward VI's death. Mary I's accession in 1553 and subsequent restoration of Catholicism caused a hiatus in the *Paraphrases*' parochial use. Although they were not specifically named in injunctions, item six of Queen Mary's 1554 Articles required 'every bishop [...] likewise travail for the condemning and repressing of corrupt and naughty opinions, unlawful books [...] and other pernicious and hurtful devices.'<sup>128</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, the only recorded Catholic dissent to the publication of the English *Paraphrases* came from the pen of Stephen Gardiner, the imprisoned Bishop of Winchester. Gardiner attacked both author and translators, declaring that 'the malice and untruth of much matter out of Erasmus penne, and also the arrogant ignorancy of the translator into English [...] a man farre unmete to meddle with such a matter, and not without malice.'<sup>129</sup> Gardiner had written this scathing critique of the draft English text whilst a prisoner deprived of his see. Having been restored by Mary I and appointed Lord Chancellor, there was no prospect of vernacular texts remaining in reinstated Catholic church interiors.

Although Erasmus had remained a critical but loyal Catholic, his reputation had become tarnished in Catholic circles through Biblical commentaries that gave impetus to the cause of reform, his lionisation by Henry VIII, and his attempts to continue to appeal both to Catholics and Protestants.

The *Paraphrases*' disappearance through quiet retirement from public spaces rather than meeting an incendiary demise in Mary I's reign suggests that attitudes to its text were complex and ambiguous. Although its translation was at times highly partisan and the new prefaces contained insulting anti-papal and anti-monastic rhetoric, it is possible that favourable references to Princess Mary's scholarship in the preface to the paraphrase on John's gospel and Erasmus's continuing popularity in England may have offered the *Paraphrases* some protection. Erasmus may have influenced Tyndall's vernacular New Testament, but his text had also been defended by the Catholic martyrs Sir Thomas More

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<sup>128</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 316.

<sup>129</sup> *Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. by Muller, no.133. Gardiner's animosity to Udall was personal, as Udall testified against him in December 1550. Udall later gained favour at Mary's court and Udall became a tutor in Gardiner's household. Gardiner left him 40 marks in his will. See A.W. Reed, 'Nicholas Udall and Thomas Wilson,' *Review of English Studies*, 1, 3 (July 1925), 275-83.

and John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester.<sup>130</sup> The association of Erasmus with their newly exalted memory may have renewed a perception of his primary identity as a critical but loyal Catholic. Erasmus's *Education of a Christian Prince* was prominent among the sparse training in statecraft provided by Mary's tutor, the humanist Vives.<sup>131</sup> Although Mary moved from a relatively tolerant religious position at the beginning of her reign, it may be that she could not dissociate herself from his early influence.

It is also remarkable that despite his anti-papal polemic, Udall also found accommodation within Mary's court. Dodds suggests that Udall possessed 'a moderate Erasmianism which was quite comfortable in the Catholic Church whilst simultaneously pushing for a text-based reformation within that universal Christian body.'<sup>132</sup> Udall's career, which had been allowed to continue without punishment or public recantation, offers a human parallel to the *Paraphrases*' survival. It suggests that his literary additions to and adaptations of Erasmus ultimately came from an ecclesiological middle ground that could be safely ignored by authority when necessary. His fellow translator Thomas Key's academic career also continued seamlessly through the reigns of Henry VIII's offspring.<sup>133</sup>

The *Paraphrases*' position in churches was reinstated in 1559. It returned as a middling as well as moderating text, bringing a bequest of Henrician Catholicism and conservative reform back into parish life. Dodds argues that Erasmus's moderating influence in stressing the need for peace and unity rather than public debate commended him to Elizabeth and her ministers, as much as his theology.<sup>134</sup>

In the 1559 Royal Injunctions Elizabeth I restored the form and practices of the Church of England as they had been in force during the reign of her brother, and with it the

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<sup>130</sup> Duffy, *Saints, Sacrifice and Sedition*, p. 138.

<sup>131</sup> Lorraine Attreed and Alexandra Winkler, 'Faith and Forgiveness: Lessons in Statecraft for Queen Mary Tudor', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 36, 4 (2005) 971-89 (p. 977).

<sup>132</sup> Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>133</sup> Damian R. Leader, 'Caius, [Kay, Key], Thomas, (c.1505-1572)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online edn, Jan. 2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/10.1093>> [accessed 18 September 2018]

<sup>134</sup> Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, p. 123.



*Paraphrases*, which were to be placed in churches within a year of the return of a large Bible in English.<sup>135</sup> Item Two of Archbishop Parker's 1560 Articles for Canterbury Province inquires of the clergy whether they possessed within their churches 'all things requisite and necessary for Common Prayer and administration of the Sacraments: specially the Book of Common Prayer, the Bible in the largest volume, the Homilies, with the Paraphrases of Erasmus.' The item goes on to list the furnishings of the reformed church interior, 'a convenient pulpit well placed: a comely and decent table for the Holy Communion [...] the chest or box for the poor men.'<sup>136</sup>

The *Paraphrases*' inclusion in the list of 'all things requisite and necessary' for worship in Archbishop Parker's 1560 Articles for Canterbury Province implies that it supported the liturgy even if not recited within it. The use of the conjunction 'with' also suggests that it was intended as an accompaniment not just to the Bible, but also the printed *Homilies*. This was enforced locally by Bishop Parkhurst's Injunctions for Norwich. In his 1569 enquiry articles, he asked 'whether you have in your churches a Bible, of the largest volume, the *Paraphrasis of Erasmus* in English, with the *Homilies* and all other books requisite for the administration of Divine Service.'<sup>137</sup> Once again, an auxiliary role for the *Paraphrases* in public worship is implied here.

One of the surprising consequences of Erasmus's adoption by the Church of England as officially-sanctioned Biblical theologian had been the embedding of his liberal Catholic understanding of the sacraments and doctrine of the relationship between free will and salvation in almost every parish. The restoration of the *Paraphrases* to parish churches in the Elizabethan Injunctions is even more remarkable, given the Calvinist ascendancy among senior clergy, especially those who had returned from Continental exile.

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<sup>135</sup> Article Six of the 1559 Royal Injunctions required that 'they shall provide within three months next after this visitation at the charges of the parish, one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English; and within one twelve months next after the said visitation, the Paraphrases of Erasmus also in English upon the Gospel, and the same set up in some convenient place within the said church that they have cure of; whereas their parishioners may most commodiously resort unto the same, and read the same, out of the time of common service.' 'The Injunctions of 1559', *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*, ed. by Henry Gee and W.H. Hardy (London: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 417-42.

<sup>136</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 81.

<sup>137</sup> Article Fifteen, Parkhurst's Injunctions for Norwich Diocese, 1569, *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 210.

Nevertheless, its return may be symptomatic of Elizabeth's wish to settle the Church of England in the form it adopted in the early years of her brother's reign.

The example of St Michael's Cornhill in the City of London provides a striking illustration of the revived status of the *Paraphrases* in the Elizabethan Church.<sup>138</sup> Having originally purchased a chained copy in 1548, a new chain was purchased in 1560 when it presumably returned to the church. This corresponds with the period of grace allowed under the 1559 Injunctions. The Cornhill *Paraphrases*' prominent display on a brass lectern set in the middle of the church suggests the necessity of a visible demonstration of compliance with the Royal Injunctions of 1547 that required the *Paraphrases* to be publicly displayed in the midst of churches. This was the performative and transformative, intentionally at least, setting of communal worship. Thus, the *Paraphrases*' moderating function was symbolic and visual as well as textual. More than that, it offered an image of Christ in a location near the spaces that the rood and nave altar crucifixes formerly occupied. In the rhetoric of the 'Third Part of the Sermon against peril of Idolatry', the false graven and painted 'bookes' of pre-Reformation devotional imagery had been obliterated and replaced with Christ's authentic representation in the scriptures:

I am sure that the New Testament of our saviour Jesus Christ, conteining the word of life, is a more lively, express and true image of our Saviour, than all carved, graven, moulten, and painted images in the world.<sup>139</sup>

If the New Testament was proclaimed as the true image of Christ, then the *Paraphrases* were its faithful copy with additional interpretation, adding cultural appropriations for a sixteenth-century audience.

However, the *Paraphrases*' principal function in churches was more private. The Injunction's provision for parishioners to 'commodiously resort unto the same, and read the same, out of the time of common service' gave both permission and a reason for them

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<sup>138</sup> *The Accounts of the Churchwardens of the Parish of St Michael, Cornhill in the City of London from 1456 to 1608*, ed. by William Henry Overall (London: published by Vestry for private circulation, 1871).

<sup>139</sup> 'The Third Part of the Homily against Images; and the worshipping of them', *Homilies*, p. 157.

to be present in a church building outside service times. This is perhaps significant, coming at a time when church visiting was becoming a source of anxiety for Protestants. Although churches were the most appropriate setting for communal prayer, Ryrie draws attention to period concerns that individual visits came too close to traditional religious practice and Protestant anxieties over hypocrisy.<sup>140</sup> He describes hypocrisy as a key vice ‘against which early British Protestants took their bearings’ which may be concealed behind any outward devotional behaviour. Although post-Reformation churches were remained as functional houses of prayer, the ‘Homily of the Time and Place of Prayer’ emphasises that they were places where ‘the people of God ought to resort together’ to sanctify the Sabbath.<sup>141</sup> In the light of these personal concerns and communal expectations, it is perhaps not surprising that Ryrie found very few references to private prayer in churches.<sup>142</sup> Before the nineteenth-century advent of academic theology, Biblical studies were often personal, confessional and frequently connected with prayer. The prescribed location of the *Paraphrases* therefore gave reason or justification for individuals or small groups to be present in otherwise empty churches as a part of their devotional and social lives.

Craig suggests that the theft of St Michael’s *Paraphrases* occurred prior to 1572, when a vestry meeting agreed that ‘the boke of Martyrs of Mr. Foxe and the Paraphrases of Erasmus shalbe bought for the churche and tyed with a Cheyne to the Egle of Brasse.’ Whether this took place or not, there was no copy in the church by 1587. It was reintroduced in that year, perhaps reluctantly by the churchwardens who had been fined to avoid excommunication for its absence. It was bought for 13s, roughly the same price paid in the Edwardian accounts.<sup>143</sup> Taking inflation into account, this sum suggests that supply conditions were very favourable, despite the apparent lack of further editions since the early 1550s. As the Edwardian copies were purchased jointly by parishioners and clergy or patrons, they may have been regarded as private property.<sup>144</sup> This may have helped them to be spirited away from churches during Mary I’s reign and re-appear in

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<sup>140</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, p. 169.

<sup>141</sup> ‘First Part of the Homily of the Place and Time of Prayer’, *Homilies*, pp. 203-4.

<sup>142</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, pp. 169, 4, 104-5.

<sup>143</sup> *Accounts of the Churchwardens of the Parish of St Michael, Cornhill*, ed. by Overall, pp. 67, 153, 167, 176, 238.

<sup>144</sup> Basic commodity prices doubled in 1556 alone. Alan and Veronica Palmer, *The Chronology of British History* (London: Century, 1992), p. 152.

more favourable times. Rather than allowing the *Paraphrases* to be confiscated by the authorities, they may have been removed to private houses, in a similar manner to Catholic recusants who secreted liturgical books in unfavourable times. For example, the Guist copy contains an inscribed ownership agreement between Thomas Dayde and Sir Simon Franklin, neither of whose names were incumbent of this or any adjacent parish during the period. During Elizabeth's reign, such copies may have re-emerged on the book market.<sup>145</sup>

The chaining of the Cornhill *Paraphrases* on the opposite side to Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* shows that public access was allowed to both books. The juxtaposition of this pair of books, if read together, would have offered intriguing hermeneutic possibilities. In historical terms, the *Paraphrases* provided an expanded account of Christianity's origins from the birth of Christ at the start of the gospels to the establishment of the Church and St Paul's preaching ministry in Rome. Foxe's narrative begins with the first Christian martyrs and ends with his accounts of the Marian persecutions. It would have been possible for an uncritical Protestant reader to treat both volumes chronologically, as a continuous narrative of the true Church from the coming of Christ to recent times. Foxe and Erasmus were both polemical authors, but with very different agendas. A slightly more astute Elizabethan reader would have therefore been left to wonder which of these largely conflicting models of Christian life and witness he or she should follow.

The Ranworth *Paraphrases* may have occupied a similar location in the nave to Cornhill's, minus Foxe. The Dictionary of Parochial Libraries lists Ranworth as possessing a desk library, as opposed to a more substantial one located in an ancillary area such as a side chapel, vestry, parsonage or former priest's room.<sup>146</sup> The desk it occupied may well have been the pre-Reformation cantor's desk, dating from the 1450s. Originally used by a cantor and clerks for the music books of the Mass and daily offices, it was retained at Ranworth as a lectern (Plate II). If so, it would have coincidentally but symbolically expressed the purpose of Erasmus's *Paraphrases*.

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<sup>145</sup> For further discussion on the issue of retention, see Craig, 'Forming a Protestant Consciousness?', in *Holy Scripture Speaks: The Production and Reception of Erasmus' Paraphrases on the New Testament*, ed. by Pabel and Vessey, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002), pp. 328-31.

<sup>146</sup> Perkin, *Parish Libraries*, p. 324.

The lectern bears two painted texts. One of them is a scroll held in the beak of an eagle, representing St John the Evangelist. The scroll contains the opening words of his gospel, in the Vulgate version: *In principio erat verbum*.<sup>147</sup> Erasmus intended his Biblical translation to supersede St Jerome's, by working from older and more reliable Greek manuscripts. This led Erasmus to translate the Greek word *logos* in John 1.1 differently. John the Evangelist introduces Christ as *logos*, God's incarnate Word, a philosophical concept representing his eternal, creative nature as much as his incarnation. *Logos* was rendered literally by Jerome *verbo*, but became *sermo* in Erasmus's translation, reclaiming its meaning as a term of proclamation. It is this 'divine eloquence, the persuasiveness of God' that characterised Erasmus's translation of the gospels.<sup>148</sup> His subsequent commentaries and paraphrases were intended 'to justify his revisions, and readers' understanding of the text, bring out its spiritual meaning and recover for them a fully authentic Christianity.'<sup>149</sup> Whether this was realised by the minister and parishioners of Ranworth at the time, Erasmus's *sermo* may have been placed, physically and symbolically, above Jerome's *verbum* in Ranworth, translated into the vernacular with added evangelical emphases. The cantor's desk had been an auxiliary object to the incarnational presence of Christ at the Mass. In its new role as desk library for minister and parishioners alike, it may have supported Erasmus's translation and commentary on Christ the incarnate Word, a prism through which all other scriptures could be refracted.

The *Paraphrases*' prominence within the body of the Church presents a challenge to prevailing narratives about its lack of impact. Even if most of Ranworth's congregation were illiterate, the presence of a large, newly printed book by a famous author would have been an object of interest, especially when it was intended not just to edify but lead them towards a true evangelical faith and eternal life. In order to understand how early modern readers engaged with these texts, scant literary evidence can now be supplemented by material examination of surviving copies and fresh interpretation of what previous generations of scholars understood simply as wanton damage. The first

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<sup>147</sup> John 1.1, Vulgate version,

<<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ioannes+1%3A1&version=VULGATE>>, [accessed 16 December 2015].

<sup>148</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom* (London: Collins, 1969), p. 174.

<sup>149</sup> Erasmus, 'Extra Material', *Praise of Folly*, p. 267.

part of the study conducted on the Ranworth and Dean and Chapter's Library copies was to consider their condition, including any damage inflicted accidentally or intentionally.

The manufacture of the examined volumes.

The examined copies are all incomplete but retain at least part of their original bindings. Despite the general characteristic they share in terms of period, dimensions and content, they have been rendered unique and distinct from each other by three stages that culminated in their present used condition.

The first stage was their publication. The first edition copies in particular exhibit a range of variations that occurred through using different presses and the royal printers' outsourcing to other workshops. A number of print-specific properties were noted, particularly the range of letter type formats used within each volume. The typographical errors that occur in different sections of the Ranworth copy attest to the speed of typesetting in Whitchurch's first edition and subsequent improvements. In a similar manner to the Norwich goldsmiths' dominance of the regional market in communion cup production, Whitchurch's national monopoly allowed him to trade off reasonable affordability with rapid, large-scale production.

This is evident in the range of gather marks to be found in each volume. Whilst there is some overlap between the Ranworth and Carbrooke volumes, there are no overall exact matches between the 1548 edition copies examined. By making comparative examination of typographical errors and inappropriate illustrations in chapter and section initials it is possible to approximately locate particular volumes within the lengthy run of the first edition. Both types of errata were gradually eliminated prior to the 1552 edition. In the case of the Ranworth copy, the presence of many errors in folio titles and numbering, together with use of a woodcut initial depicting St Lawrence, and an 'A' initial depicting God creating Eve used in four places, suggests it may be located among the earliest

versions (plate III).<sup>150</sup> Images of God the Father were anathema to evangelicals, and a depiction of a saint clad in a mass vestment, a deacon's dalmatic, would have been almost as distasteful. Comparison between the Ranworth and Hethersett copies revealed that the latter had fewer typographical errors and neither of the offensive initials, suggesting that it was a later version of the 1548 edition.

Although the English *Paraphrases* were arguably humanist texts in terms of their authorship and content, they were not typeset in white letter, otherwise referred to as humanist or more recently as roman type, as Erasmus's original Latin publication had been. This would arguably have deterred many in the English *Paraphrases*' intended audience. The overwhelming use of black letter or gothic type in the English translation of the *Paraphrases* would have signalled to its audience that this work was both vernacular and ecclesiastical.<sup>151</sup>

Before a text can be read, its font is discerned visually and in the case of sixteenth-century books, offers a preparation for the genre the reader is about to encounter. In the case of black letter type, this was particularly indicative of a vernacular ecclesiastical or legal text and its significance would be evident even to the illiterate. The white letter or humanist type was favoured for Latin humanist works until the mid-sixteenth century. It appears only sporadically in the first edition of 1548, and then, perhaps paradoxically, to denote New Testament texts in the second edition. The social historian Keith Thomas argues that vernacular use of black letter type was an important building block in developing literacy in early modern England: 'Black letter was the type for the common people [...] Black-letter literacy [...] was a more basic skill than roman-type literacy.'<sup>152</sup> In the same way that being fully literate in the sixteenth century involved mastering

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<sup>150</sup> God the Father creating Eve from Adam appears in the Ranworth copy in each of the New Testament books: Matthew fol. 17<sup>v</sup>, Mark fol. 65<sup>r</sup>, Luke fol. 38<sup>r</sup>, John fol. 14<sup>r</sup>, Acts fol. 60<sup>r</sup>. The St Lawrence initial begins St Jerome's life of St Luke.

<sup>151</sup> The inventories of over one hundred Oxford private libraries between 1507 and 1554 reveal that out of a total of fifty humanist volumes, twenty were by Erasmus. E.S. Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories: book-lists from Vice-Chancellor's Court probate inventories in the Tudor and Stuart periods*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986), cited by J.B. Trapp, in 'The Humanist Book', *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, III, 283-315 (p. 287).

<sup>152</sup> Keith Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. by Gerd Baumann (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), pp. 97-131 (p. 99).

Latin, learning to read roman or white letter type, required further learning. This use of black letter for humanist learning continued in the following reign, when Mary I's printer William Rastell published his uncle Sir Thomas More's *Works* in English. The book historian Lotte Hellinga observes that black letter type provided 'a recognition that almost all More's *English Works* dealt with matters necessary to salvation.' Unlike the white letter Geneva Bible from 1560 onwards, spiritual books printed in black letter type remained an English publishing convention into the seventeenth century.<sup>153</sup>

In order to save weight during carriage, unbound copies would have been sold to stationers in Norwich and other major centres to provide for local markets. Having been purchased jointly by clergy and churchwardens, the next stage involved their binding. A number of bookbinders operated in Norwich during the mid- to late sixteenth century, including the freemen grocers Nicholas Colman, John Clifford and possibly William Gilbert. This may account for the range of styles to be found in surviving bindings. For example, the blind (unblocked) tooling on the leather cover of the Guist and Weston Longville copies is very similar, as are the Ranworth and Paston copies. The Shipdham copy is more opulently bound using oak boards rather than paste board and brass corner plates and a central brass lozenge with mountings for glass or stones (Plate IV).

The third and longest formative stage of the *Paraphrases*' was evidence of reception by their parochial owners and users that has been left of their reading habits, inscriptions, annotations and sometimes damage. These aspects of the Ranworth and Dean and Chapter's copies will be considered in turn, beginning with their bindings and working inwards to consider their printed features and finally their readers' additions.

The volumes have been examined for signs of wear and tear, negligence and deliberate damage. There was a wide variety between the present condition of the different volumes. The Paston copy was in good condition and yielded a wide range of data, whilst research on the even more informative copy from the parish of Bacton had to be conducted with great care to prevent the leaves from disintegrating in my hands. Many volumes exhibited water damage that particularly affected the opening and closing

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<sup>153</sup> Hellinga and Trapp, Introduction, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by Hellinga and Trapp, III, pp. 1-30 (p. 24).



sections, and food and drink spillages had occurred in the Ranworth and other copies. The loss of leaves from the front and back of all volumes made it impossible to fully reconstruct either original edition. Although none of the surviving texts show signs of being contradicted or defaced by readers, deliberate tearing or cutting out of leaves are evident in the Ranworth, Ashby St. Mary and Guist copies.

Drawing from palaeographical evidence, of marginal notes and inscriptions, the volumes' working 'lives' reached a *terminus ante quem* sometime in the seventeenth century. A number of inscriptions, one of them dated, appear to have been added in the 1630s, when the Laudian movement deployed Erasmus's works in their argument for a Church of England identity as a non-Calvinist *via media* among Protestant churches.<sup>154</sup> The 1630 Archdeacon's Visitation records the Ranworth copy as being 'rent and torne' and in need of rebinding. This rebinding did not occur, but repairs to twenty-four leaf edges in the Acts of the Apostles, namely glued on paper strips, may reflect an economical attempt at compliance.<sup>155</sup> The same repair technique was used on the Shipdham copy.<sup>156</sup>

It is also important to note this direction's timescale. Just as the *Paraphrases*' arrival in the late 1540s to early 1550s was accompanied by the reform of church buildings and worship, its repair would have occurred in a decade when an altar rail was introduced at Ranworth and misericord seats from the former Abbey church of St. Benet's were installed in the chancel to bring greater decency and physically-bounded holiness to worship there.

One feature which became very noticeable during research was the smaller number of markings in the 1552 edition compared with the first. This may be partly due to the diminished marginal space available in the former, caused by the frequent appearance of printed marginal texts. Certainly, the 1552 Weston Longville copy has only ink blots on a couple of leaves to indicate where notes may have been recorded in notebooks. However, the side margins left enough space for short, vertically-orientated inscriptions, and blank, horizontal room remained available at the bottom of each leaf. It may simply be that the prescriptive interpretations offered by the new edition's overtly evangelical gloss may

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<sup>154</sup> Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, pp. 195-205.

<sup>155</sup> Ranworth copy, Acts fols. 68-81.

<sup>156</sup> Shipdham copy, Dedication to Edward VI, 5<sup>th</sup> fol.<sup>r</sup>.

have inhibited individual responses or resolved queries, strengthening the moderating role that the *Paraphrases* were intended for. Alternatively, it may suggest that interest in Erasmus's gospel writings was at its greatest before 1552.

When considering the content of added inscriptions, attention has been given to period of handwriting involved. This is in part to restrict consideration of markings to the sixteenth century alone, which is extremely difficult where there is no accompanying inscription, but also to discern their likely significance. For example, in the Colegate copy, which contains sixteenth and seventeenth-century handwriting, a faded inscription appears in the right margin of Erasmus's paraphrase of Luke 6.1-5, in which Jesus defends his disciples against a charge of Sabbath-breaking, levied by the Pharisees.<sup>157</sup> Udall's preface explicitly identifies the Pharisees with the Papacy to his Edwardian audience, but those influenced by Laudianism in the seventeenth century may have seen their opponents as being rather closer to home, in the form of puritanism.<sup>158</sup>

Although this group of volumes suffered accidental damage over a long period by being badly stored or dropped, they also frequently contain evidence of sloppy handling. In the fourteenth century Richard de Bury wrote contemptuously of the novice reader whose

Nails are stuffed with fetid filth as black as jet, with which he marks any passage that pleases him [...] He does not fear to eat fruit or cheese over an open book, or to carelessly carry a cup to and from his mouth; and [...] drops into books the fragments that are left [...] hastily folding his arms he leans forward on the book [...] and then, by way of mending the wrinkles, he folds back the margin of the leaves, to the no small injury of the book [...]<sup>159</sup>

He goes on to castigate 'those shameless youths, who as soon as they learn to form the shapes of letters, straightaway [...] become unhappy commentators, and wherever they

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<sup>157</sup> Colegate copy, Luke fol.73<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>158</sup> See Peter Heylyn's *History of the Sabbath in two bookes* (London: Parslowe, Harper and Cotes, 1636), STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) / 13274, cited by Kenneth L. Parker, *The English Sabbath: A study of doctrine and discipline from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), pp. 1,6-7.

<sup>159</sup> Richard de Bury, *Philobiblon*, ch.17, fol. 157-59, cited by Sherman, *Used Books*, p. 161.

find an extra margin about the text, furnish it with monstrous alphabets.’<sup>160</sup> Evidence of these regrettable but historically interesting practices can be found in a number of the examined copies of the *Paraphrases*.

The condition of the Ranworth and Weston Longville *Paraphrases* in particular attests to a continuity of casual reading practices from the medieval to Reformation-era Church. The casual approach to marking described by Richard de Bury inevitably creates grey areas where scholarly judgements about whether or not they are deliberate can be arbitrary. Another example was the practice of ‘blotting’, presumably flicking ink from a pen onto a passage to highlight its text, which could also have an accidental origin. Conversely, breadcrumbs lodged in bindings could have been used to erase pencil markings or dirty fingerprints.<sup>161</sup>

Although these were recognised in the sixteenth century and subsequently as *aide memoires*, I have not recorded folded leaf corners on the copies I have examined.<sup>162</sup> This is primarily because they can occur accidentally, when books are dropped, closed or stored carelessly. Also, if they were of deliberate origin, they would be impossible to date, unless they could be associated speculatively with surviving markings, which are problematic in themselves. I have also treated ink blots as accidental marks. However, it is worth remembering that they indicate that a reader with pen in hand was looking at a particular leaf and possibly recording their notes elsewhere. At the very least, they are evidence that the volume had lain open at those leaves.

The incompleteness of the entire group of volumes examined has already been noted. The ending of interactions with the *Paraphrases* in the seventeenth century suggests a loss of interest and greater neglect. Given the large number of leaves and the fragility of paper in relation to their binding, it seems obvious that missing leaves at the beginning

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<sup>160</sup> Richard de Bury, *The Love of Books: The Philobiblon of Richard de Bury* (Whitefish: Kessinger, 2007), ch.17, fols 157-59.

<sup>161</sup> John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius: Or, the Grammar Schoole* (London: Lownes, 1612), STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) / 3768, fols.46-7, cited by Sherman, in *Used Books*, p. 161. Brinsley was a cleric, teacher and writer on education who advocated a detailed marking scheme for students and using wheat breadcrumbs for erasing black lead pencil marks.

<sup>162</sup> Sherman, *Used Books*, p. 75.

and end of each volume are simply the result of age and wear. However, evidence of tearing as well as wear requires consideration.

As a parallel example, a seventeenth-century edition King James Bible belonging to St. Helen's, Ranworth, was examined for damage marks. A large number of leaves had been torn out of both ends, with the frontispiece to the New Testament also missing. Three techniques appear to have been used. Single sheets had been torn out carelessly, with no regard taken to which parts of the printed texts were removed or how their residual stubs appeared. A second technique of pulling out several leaves in one attempt resulted in stubs having an almost identical profile, often twisted together as they were torn against the supporting spine. The third technique, used to remove the New Testament frontispiece, reflected careful removal, with a relatively even edge, close to the spine. Evidence of the first two tearing out techniques were present in the Ranworth *Paraphrases*, and also in the Norwich St George Colegate copy. Carbrooke has one torn out page, and the Guist binding retains six cut leaf stubs at the end, probably from the contents table. The lack of artistry in the volume's production rendered the third technique unnecessary.

It is currently not possible to determine the date or intentions or numbers of perpetrators behind such damage. However, the example of the Ranworth copy does offer some reasonable hypotheses. The presence of the much-damaged King James Bible suggests that the *Paraphrases* may not have been significantly damaged until the seventeenth century at the earliest, but these practices also occurred during the previous century. Deliberate damage to vernacular ecclesiastical books had certainly occurred in Mary I's reign. Question fifty-one of Bishop Parkhurst's 1561 Injunctions and Interrogatories for Norwich Diocese asked 'whether any man hath burned or caused the Bible to be burned, torn or defaced: or hath conveyed it out of the church that it should not be read of the people.'<sup>163</sup> The Archdeacon's Visitation returns of 1630 that ordered the rebinding of Ranworth's volume of *Paraphrases*, suggests that much of the damage evident today may have occurred by then. Sixty-two leaves are missing from the beginning of the Ranworth copy, including stub evidence that the whole of Erasmus's preface to the volume had been torn out in one action. Unless the view is taken that this damage was

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<sup>163</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 105.

purely coincidental, consideration needs to be given to Erasmus's changing reputation in sixteenth-century England.

Catholic suspicions, coupled with Udall's hyperbole, may have prompted an angry response following England's restoration to the Catholic Church in 1554. This antipathy may also account for the tearing out of the first leaf of Thomas Key's dedication of his translation of the paraphrase on Mark to Queen Katherine.<sup>164</sup> Katherine Parr does not appear to have been the cause of offence, as other dedications to her remain intact in the volume. Possibly her memory was protected by her royal status. Key's dedication, however, contained strongly disparaging references to pre-Reformation faith:

(during the tyme of this great ignoraunce and blindness) many a thousand put more confidence of soul health in [...] pardons, in pilgrimages, in kissing of reliques, in offring to saintes, in hallowed beades, in mumblyng of prayers, in mumblyng up of Psalmes not understood [...] Now hath England cleane forsaken Antichrist of Rome, the greatest enemy of Gods holy word, with al his most ungodly devices, and devilish invencions.<sup>165</sup>

If this leaf's removal relates to the Marian period, the person or persons responsible remain unknown. One of the leading families of the parish, the Holdiches, was regarded as conservative in religious matters, and Sir John Taylor, instituted to Ranworth as a crown appointee in 1558, may have disliked parts of the Paraphrases, yet did not destroy it entirely.

It would be misleading to assert that deliberate removal of leaves from *Paraphrases* necessarily represents censorship or disapproval. The Ranworth copy's life of St John the Evangelist by St Jerome has also been torn out. This rather innocuous passage may have suffered on account of its brevity. A leaf that would have been blank on one and a half sides would have provided a valuable piece of notepaper, as would the blank leaf in the middle of Matthew 12, that has survived in other 1548 volumes but not at Ranworth. Smaller blank areas within volume were also used occasionally for unrelated notes and calculations. The large bottom margin at the end of Luke's gospel in the Bacton copy,

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<sup>164</sup> Ranworth copy, leaf following Matthew fol. 122.

<sup>165</sup> Paston copy, first leaf of Key's Preface to Queen Katherine.

and margins on the following dedication page contain a set of harvest accounts and prayer (Plate V, see below).<sup>166</sup>

In his translator's preface, Nicholas Udall urged devout readers

with glad will [to] embrace so profitable a meane and instrument, wherby thou maiest (without any ferther travaille then onely reading, marking, and bearing it away,) so easily attain to the clere understanding of the ghospell.<sup>167</sup>

Marking in sixteenth-century England was understood as both an inward and outward activity. Mental learning and memorising information were frequently accompanied by physical interaction with texts. Marking them was an accepted method of organising and retrieving information for personal or didactic use. Although there was much in the translators' dedications and prefaces to his English *Paraphrases* that Erasmus would certainly have disagreed with, he encouraged the practice of marking passages. Erasmus recommended consistent systems of annotation for 'striking words, archaic or novel diction, cleverly contrived or well adapted arguments, brilliant flashes of style, adages, example, and pithy remarks worth memorizing. Such passages should be marked with an appropriate little sign.' He further stated that a limited range of symbols should be used systematically in order to be more easily remembered.<sup>168</sup> These emphases on rhetoric and memorisation offer a period template against which the *Paraphrases*' markings can be measured. Udall's commendation to the *Paraphrases*' new vernacular English audience to read, mark and bear away would have been understood by them as a recognisable pathway. to Bearing away signified more than simply taking notes or memorizing passages. It was a directive to deeply absorb the scriptures and Erasmus's guidance that accompanied them, as will become apparent below.

In the same vein as Udall's preface, Edward Vaughan's 1594 guide to Bible study advocated a threefold process of reading, noting and exercise, 'to the end that you may

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<sup>166</sup> Bacton copy, Luke fol. 170<sup>v</sup>. and Translator's Dedication to Queen Katherine, John's Gospel fol. 1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>167</sup> Udall, Untitled Preface in *Paraphrases*, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>168</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *De ratione studii*, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. by Craig Thompson, 89 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1978), XXIV, cited by Sherman in *Used Books*, pp. 27-29.

make perfect use of your Reading, I have thought to compose this order for your Noting; then (Gods spirit assisting) your Exercise will be easie.’<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, as Udall penned these words, Cranmer was also composing collects for the first Book of Common Prayer that would be published a year after the first edition of the *Paraphrases*. For the second Sunday in Advent, he encapsulated the Christian audience’s task of recognition, absorption and manifestation thus:

Blessed lord, which hast caused all holy Scriptures to bee written for our learning; graunte us that we maye in suche wyse heare them, read, marke, learne, and inwardly digest them; that by pacience, and comfort of thy holy woorde, we may embrace, and ever holde fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast geven us in our saviour Jesus Christe.<sup>170</sup>

Cranmer’s injunction to ‘read, marke, learne, and inwardly digest’ strengthens and deepens Udall’s instruction to ‘bear away.’ Reading and marking the scriptures involved more than noting precepts and arguments that were to be learned and applied. They were to be consumed and internalised, like the salvific images of the medieval Church before them, and to be pondered, like Mary’s testimony to Christ’s early life, in the heart of the believer.<sup>171</sup> It is also important to remember that they may have been spiritual responses rather than *aide memoires*.

A large number of markings follow Erasmus’s precepts and are clearly study-related, reflecting a transposition from the Latin *Paraphrases* as university set-text to the English version in the extended learning zone of the parish. However, amongst the underlining, marginal ‘n’s, crosses and other symbols, other markings frequently occur that are irregular, abstract and sometimes barely visible. These seem unsuitable for the swift retrieval or remembering of text, and of potentially inward purposes, expressing

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<sup>169</sup> Edward Vaughan, *Ten Introductions: How to read, and in reading how to understand; and in understanding how to bear in mind all books, chapters, and verses contained in the holie Bible* (London: Islip, 1594), STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) / 24599, sig. K4v., cited by Sherman, *Used Books*, p. 75.

<sup>170</sup> *The First Prayer Book of King Edward VI 1549 reprinted from a copy in the British Museum* (London: Griffith Farran Browne, [n.d.]), p. 33.

<sup>171</sup> See Luke 2.19, 51.

individual responses that would remain obscure to others. Other markings appear more reflective and internal.

The large unmarked sections of gospels in Ranworth and the other Norfolk copies examined suggests that readers did not primarily use the *Paraphrases* to support study of the Sunday lectionary. Instead there is evidence that it was used topically or thematically. For example, passages such as Mark 10.13-16 suggest that Erasmus's authority may have been invoked in discussions on infant baptism, as this passage was a frequently cited justification. Perhaps more unexpected was the interest in references to John the Baptist, his disciples and even in those who had experienced his baptism evident from markings throughout the gospels and in Acts.

Despite the lack of an obvious Protestant preaching agenda concerning John, there would undoubtedly be reasons to offer fresh teaching on him in the early Church of England. As Christ's cousin, forerunner, he was second only to the Virgin Mary in the Catholic hierarchy of saints, with multiple versions of his relics dispersed across Christendom.<sup>172</sup> At Ranworth, there was the common medieval pairing of Lady and St John the Baptist nave altars. His image on the altarpiece behind his altar presumably had survived until 1547 at least and would potentially have been remembered by members of the congregation for decades to come. Members of Ranworth's guild of St John the Baptist would possibly have feasted in front of his altar and image until its suppression in the year before the *Paraphrases*' publication.<sup>173</sup> The chronology of the *Paraphrases*' publication fits almost seamlessly with the obliteration or mutilation of John the Baptist's images in churches and rejection of the *Golden Legend*, a major source of the post-New Testament traditions about him.<sup>174</sup> The *Golden Legend* contains popular beliefs about dragons as plague bearers, to be warded off by 'St John's fires' of animal bones.<sup>175</sup> Within the Ranworth rood screen, he was depicted near images of SS George and Michael whose panels show them slaying dragons.<sup>176</sup> Medieval images of dragons are

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<sup>172</sup> *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. by Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger, 2 vols (New York: Longmans Green, 1969), II, pp. 132-40.

<sup>173</sup> Pre-Reformation Ranworth possessed three guilds – St Helen, Holy Trinity and St John the Baptist.

<sup>174</sup> *Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. by Ryan and Ripperger, I, pp. 328-36.

<sup>175</sup> *Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. by Ryan and Ripperger, I, pp. 335-36.

<sup>176</sup> Revelation 12.3-9.



common in the churches of the Bure valley, occasionally accompanied by depictions of woodwoses, the equally mythical wild people of the marshes who fought against them. These may reflect local fears about dragons as bearers of plague. As the New Testament's prime baptizer, his ministry may have also had some relevance in baptismal controversies. There would be much for the Edwardian and Elizabethan congregations to learn and unlearn about the Baptist, with Erasmus's gentle but clear guidance.

The markings examined in the Ranworth and Dean and Chapter copies appear to have been made by three principal means. Most obvious and common are ink inscriptions and markings made by pen strokes. The use of ink pens offers some insight into the places and means in which the *Paraphrases* were consulted. For a lone reader, it would be necessary to place the volume on a flat table with an ink well placed nearby. In order to make pen markings while the volume was on a lectern, the writer would need one hand to rest on the book whilst the other held the pen and another person held the ink well. Inkhorns were sometimes worn on belts, but carried risks of spillage, especially on the wearer's clothing.<sup>177</sup>

The second type are blank indentations, lacking pigment or residues. These would have been made by a stylus, sometimes referred to as a 'pin'. These were generally silver, copper or brass and were used to inscribe writing-tables or table books. These were either pages consisting of pasteboard, gesso and glue that could be wiped clean and were added to printed almanacs or sometimes composed entirely of erasable pages. These were sold with a stylus or 'pinne' made of either silver, brass or copper. The indents made by silver styluses left a small deposit of the metal that eventually oxidised into a grey colour. All the stylus markings in the examined *Paraphrases* were blind and therefore produced by baser metals. Adam Smyth reflects on Hamlet's commitment to erasing past pleasures in his metaphorical reference to the impermanence of table book notes, which would have been wiped off with a sponge to make room for new writings: 'from the table of my memory, I'll wipe away all trivial or fond records'.<sup>178</sup> The widespread use of table books

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<sup>177</sup> Peter Stallybrass, Robert Chartier, J. Franklin Mowery and Heather Wolfe, 'Hamlet's Table-book and the Technologies of Writing in Renaissance England', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 55, 4 (Winter 2004), 379-419 (p. 381).

<sup>178</sup> William Shakespeare, *Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, I. 5. 97-105, in *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. by Wells, Stanley and Gary Taylor, 3 vols, (London: Book Club Associates, 1987), III, pp. 1123-63 (p. 1131).

by the English *Paraphrases*' readers may conceivably help to explain the lack of period references to the volume's use.

These blind stylus markings only became visible with an oblique light source and are therefore unlikely to have been used as indicators for later retrieval of information or reading aloud. The blind markings range from depictions of figures or objects to individual strokes. In the left margin of the Paston copy of Erasmus's paraphrase on Mark 10.17-22, a figure of a smiling schoolboy in a gown has been traced out next to a characteristically Erasmian passage about the need to teach the young with kindness (plate VI):

we ought not in any wise oversharply to rebuke yong folkes [...] and by that meanes cause them to withdrawe their yong & tender mindes from the gospel, as some wayward scholemaisters are wont to doe, which by reason of their crueltie and roughness, be wont to teache good wittes to hate learning.<sup>179</sup>

The Ranworth copy has relatively few ink markings but many blind ones. The left margin of the paraphrase on the parable of the dishonest steward in Luke 16 is marked with diagonal lines similar to graffiti marks on the stonework in nearby churches at South Walsham and Upton. In another place, a symbolic harp, a common form of graffiti inscription characterised by the archaeologist Matthew Champion as being often associated with King David, saints, angels and blessings appears in a left margin with no obvious relation to the adjacent text, in which Erasmus wrote of the spiritual food leading to eternal life that Christ offers his followers.<sup>180</sup> Champion notes this particular mark appearing in a number of Norfolk churches, and in several locations in Blakeney church, but despite traditional iconographical associations of the harp with the Old Testament King David, there appears to be no direction connection with their location within churches or the Ranworth copy. The appearance of these markings on John's gospel appear significant, because it is in this book that Erasmus's Neoplatonism is most evident. In his comments on the feeding of the five thousand, Erasmus remarks 'It is the

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Smyth, *Material Texts*, p. 14.

<sup>179</sup> Paston copy, Mark fol. 57<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>180</sup> Ranworth copy, John fol. 39<sup>r</sup>. (John 6.53-4). See Champion, *Medieval Graffiti*, p. 176 on mural harp marks.

spirit that gives life. The flesh is of no avail.’<sup>181</sup> Unintentionally, his spiritualisation of the Eucharist would be echoed in the Church of England through the liturgy of Cranmer and to some extent, the theology of Calvin.

In contrast, the opening folios of the paraphrase on the opening verses of John 1 display blind markings that could be more readily related to note-taking in a writing-table. A patch of group of indents made with a stylus point that could be described as thud marks, made by a reader drumming their stylus in the same area in the right-hand margin of the paraphrase. These may have been made by a right-handed reader standing directly in front of the text. In the adjacent text, Erasmus expounds his philosophy, which echoes medieval nominalism in stating that Christ’s divine nature cannot be perceived, imagined or expressed by the human mind. Next to a second group of thud marks lower down the page, Erasmus opines that Christ can only be comprehended by faith alone, rather than human wisdom. On the second folio, a diagonal line accompanies the text ‘there is nothing anywhere among all the things that God ever made, where of we may make comparison which can thoroughly agree with the truth of the godhead.’<sup>182</sup> Although Erasmus’s philosophical pronouncements had medieval origins, they possessed new significance for Christians wrestling with concepts of outward and inward idolatry.

Champion describes many of these inscriptions as apotropaic or protection marks intended to safeguard the book from theft or harm.<sup>183</sup> However, many of the marks in the copies of the Paraphrases examined in this study consist mainly of parallel lines or cross-hatching, swirls, even dots, more than human or animal figures, symbols or patterns. The incised swirls and lines are consistent with marks made with pen strokes that could otherwise have been construed as accidental or practice strokes.<sup>184</sup> Their greatest affinity with mural graffiti is not so much with defined, outlined shapes, but with the myriad unconnected or abstract lines that covered the lower levels of many church interiors. Although their intrinsic and relative meanings in terms of positioning within buildings remains obscure and highly conjectural, their deployment in the margins of an

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<sup>181</sup> John 6.53, 63. ‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you.’ Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom*, p. 82.

<sup>182</sup> Ranworth copy, John fols 1<sup>v</sup> and 2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>183</sup> Matthew Champion, e-mail to the author, 1 March 2016. See Champion, *Medieval Graffiti*, pp. 25-28 on mural protection marks.

<sup>184</sup> See Ranworth copy, Luke fol. 157<sup>v</sup>.

evangelical text may offer fresh insights. The blind markings in the leaf margins of the *Paraphrases* appear as a continuation of the graffiti on coloured walls and pillars, but with the obvious exception of being barely visible. In the recent past, mural graffiti would have revealed pale stone or plaster behind the pigment, instantly recognisable on each visit to the church building. These would have been far less visible in the newly whitewashed church interiors. Similarly, the blind markings in the *Paraphrases* would not be obvious even to their originator. This suggests that they were transitory, externalised expressions of a mental impression occurring at that moment, rather than markings to assist later retrieval of text. This suggests that despite scholarly claims of indifference, the *Paraphrases* did not leave their original audience unmoved.

The third and least frequent are smear or smudge marks, highlighting texts, inscriptions and marginal additions applied by brush or finger in pigment, charcoal or soot. These have been recorded as inscriptions, letters or recognisable symbols, or more often in the case of stylus impressions, where they are abstract, geometric, curvilinear, or single strokes. More than one of these marking strategies often appear in relation to the same passage of text. For example, in the Bacton copy, Erasmus's paraphrase on Luke 19.8 has text underlined in ink, coupled with a black diagonal smear across it and a marginal ink inscription approving Zaccheus's response to salvation by sharing half his wealth with the poor.<sup>185</sup>

Conversely, long passages of largely undisturbed text may reflect the nature of the *Paraphrases* as a reference book and it is important to consider how they were not used as well as ways in which they were. For example, the absence of wear and notation in entire gospels in the Ranworth copy suggests they may have remained largely unstudied. In contrast, there appears from the presence of ink markings to have been a preference for Luke's gospel, followed by John's gospel. There are no ink markings in the surviving leaves of Matthew's gospel. However, when other marks are taken into consideration, such as smudge or splatter marks and blind 'graffiti' style markings are included, a very different picture emerges.

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<sup>185</sup> Bacton copy, Luke fol. 125<sup>v</sup>.

When all markings are taken into consideration, the Ranworth copy of Matthew's gospel appears to have been a much more studied text than ink markings alone may indicate, with twenty-four leaves marked. The lead up to Christ's passion and account of his resurrection and his ascension, from Matthew 23-28, received particular attention. Similarly, Mark is inscribed in ink on six leaves, but marked by smears, splatters and drawn lines on twenty-three others.

Scripture passages appear, a few verses at a time in small, dense, black letter type and marked by a marginal note as 'the text.' The Biblical verses are followed by Erasmus's expansive paraphrase in larger type (Plate VII). This example from Ranworth's Mark 1 has a doodled plinth placed beneath 'The text.' It is perhaps suggestive of a statue plinth, indicating a transformed devotional focus, or even more closely resembles a corbel bracket, implying a structural place for scripture within the individual believer as a temple of the Holy Spirit, or more prosaically, it may echo the internal appearance of the church. During the early period of the book's use and certainly until the 1580s, Ranworth Church's whitewashed walls were embellished with Biblical texts, presumably at this date in the same Black letter.<sup>186</sup> This textual correspondence of wall and printed page suggests a visual integration of the open volume within the public space of the nave. Conversely, it may have simply been a doodle, albeit a unique one within the surveyed copies. There is one other example of a marking that may have architectural connotations. The Paston copy contains a smear marking in the bottom margin that is reminiscent of vaulting, window tracery, or possibly even a hearse framework that would have covered a coffin in the pre-Reformation funeral rite (Plate VIII).

In his survey of printed Bibles between the 1530s and 1630s, Sherman noted at least eight categories of readers' marks, namely, ownership notes, pen exercises, cross-references, lectern instructions, numberings, corrections, polemical notes and dates.<sup>187</sup> Of these, seven can be found in the *Paraphrases*, with only corrections being completely

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<sup>186</sup> 'Notices of the Church at Randworth, Walsham Hundred', Morant and L'Estrange, 178-211 (p. 197). The authors cite the Archdeacon's Visitation report of 1597 that 'the Church not sufficiently covered, for it raineth into the said church, and have washed the writing on the walles.'

<sup>187</sup> Sherman, *Used Books*, pp. 80-83.

absent. Whilst tearing out has already been discussed, no attempts were made to correct the typography or edit the content of these volumes.

Ranworth's is in the majority of volumes that bears no surviving marks of parochial ownership. These may have been inscribed on the now largely absent frontispieces. In the Colegate copy, the owner is identified as the parish, whilst the Shipdham copy has the name of an unconnected Norfolk village, Tacolneston, inscribed on the frontispiece. A possible explanation would be that parishes loaned their copies to others who did not possess the *Paraphrases*, ahead of official inspections.<sup>188</sup> Weston Longville's frontispiece is inscribed in a later, possibly nineteenth-century hand, a very rare example of a later addition to the *Paraphrases*. The Guist copy contains a witnessed ownership inscription, and the Paston copy has the same and also a witnessed inscription linking it to the parish.<sup>189</sup> Most of the surveyed ownership inscriptions were located mid-volume, and the loss of front and end leaves in most volumes has undoubtedly involved the disappearance of ownership material. The Shipdham copy's inscription actually defines non-ownership. The name Nicholas Wade is written four times on one leaf in different styles and hands, on two occasions with Latin declarations that he did not own the book. This would imply that Nicholas Wade had use or custody rather than ownership of the volume. If he were an incumbent, he would have free use of the moveable objects within the church building for legitimate purposes, whilst they remained property of the churchwardens. This arrangement, laid down by canon law, suggests that the *Paraphrases* were treated in the same manner as other church furnishings listed in the Injunctions, despite being a joint purchase between minister and vestry.

However, 'ownership' can take other, non-literal forms, and the considerable number of readers who added their names suggests that this category requires expansion. The willingness of individuals to identify themselves in the *Paraphrases* suggests that they may have functioned as ancestor of the modern church visitors' book. Beyond leaving a

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<sup>188</sup> Craig, 'Forming a Protestant Consciousness?', in *Holy Scripture Speaks*, ed. by Hilmar and Vessey, pp. 316-60 (p. 330). Craig cites examples from Chichester and Salisbury dioceses. He adds, 'such practices always ran the danger of backfiring.'

<sup>189</sup> Guist copy, fol.<sup>v</sup> before Acts fol. 1. Paston copy, Luke fol .93<sup>r</sup>, endleaf.

written trace of their existence in a public place for posterity, endorsement of the volume or specific passages within it also merits consideration.

The Paston copy offers the example of three men from the coastal parishes of Bacton and Gimmingham, whose names are recorded in the paraphrase on Luke 2. This appears to have been a lay group, whose names do not appear on the Church of England clergy careers website. Given the Elizabethan prohibition on ‘prophesyings’, clergy would not have advertised the fact that they had met together to discuss the scriptures, albeit through the moderating filter of Erasmus’s paraphrasing, and those named do not match the incumbents of the parishes mentioned. The presence of laymen’s names, and thus far only male names have been encountered, begins to form a response to Heal’s ‘deafening silence’ on the *Paraphrases*’ impact on lay spirituality.<sup>190</sup> Directly underneath the inscription, is a vertically aligned and discrete *Ave Maria* monogram, inscribed blind, possibly by a stylus or knife point (Plate IX). This strongly suggests that a group within the local area were expressing traditional devotion to Mary’s intercessory power on behalf of sinners within the context of Erasmus’s text. Given the prominence given by Luke to the Virgin in the chapter covering Jesus’ birth and childhood, this devotional response is perhaps unsurprising but also demonstrates persistent conservative expression in a period which saw official rejection of traditional Marian devotions.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the *Ave Maria* had become a very popular prayer in for pre-Reformation English Christians, frequently appearing in the Little Office of the Virgin in Books of Hours and Primers and was translated into English in the King’s Primer of 1545.<sup>191</sup> Duffy also cites the thousand *Aves* prayer charm that appeared in some English Books of Hours. It was claimed that reciting the *Ave Maria* one hundred times per day for ten days whilst holding alms to be given to the poor would ensure the granting of the petitioner’s prayer.<sup>192</sup> Use of the King’s Primer alone was permitted by the 1547 Royal Articles, until this publication was replaced by its thoroughly evangelical successor in 1551, which omitted the *Ave Maria*.<sup>193</sup> Intercession by Mary and the saints

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<sup>190</sup> Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland*, p. 297.

<sup>191</sup> King’s Primer, (London, Petyt: 1544), STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) / 16033. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, pp. 328-29.

<sup>192</sup> Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>193</sup> Royal Primer, (London: Grafton, 1551), STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) / 16054.

had already been excised from public worship. Item One of the 1547 Royal Injunctions declared that ‘all goodness, health and grace, ought to be both asked and looked for only of God, as of the author and giver of the same, and of none other’ and Item Twenty-One required that antiphons, collects and versicles that commemorated Mary and other devotional cults at Evensong be omitted.<sup>194</sup> The order for Communion in the 1549 omitted the secret collects of the Sarum Mass, two of which included invocation of the Virgin’s protection.<sup>195</sup> The *Ave* was restored to worship under Mary I and rejected again under Elizabeth I and her successors. Conversely, use of the English *Paraphrases* was forbidden in Mary I’s reign.

This *Ave Maria* marking against a vernacular gospel text illustrates the sometime paradoxical nature of religious expression in period in which ordinary people’s impulses and language did not keep abreast with official changes. However, the monogram’s survival also reveals the latitude that enabled moderately inappropriate expressions to be overlooked. The location of this inscription at Paston, signed by an inhabitant of Bacton, raises intriguing possibilities. Intriguingly, Bromholm Priory was located within the parish of Bacton. Until its dissolution in 1536, the Cluniac Priory of Bromholm had been a major pilgrimage destination, rivalling Walsingham. Its prominence came through miracles associated with its relics of the true cross and the Virgin’s milk. It was said that thirty-five people had been raised from the dead and sight restored to nineteen others.<sup>196</sup>

There is a small irony evident in this traditional expression of devotion, made in response to the vernacular translation of Erasmus’s accurate gospel text and paraphrasing that was intended to amplify and earth the passage for the unfamiliar reader. The author himself rejected mechanical invocation when venerating Mary.<sup>197</sup> However, although Erasmus was textually parenthesised by evangelical translators, he wrote as a liberal but loyal Catholic and his writings could be still valued by conservatives.

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<sup>194</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, pp.114, 122.

<sup>195</sup> J.T. Tomlinson, ‘The Sarum Mass versus Edward VI’s ‘First’ Prayer Book’, Church Society Tracts 113, <[http://archive.churchsociety.org/publications/documents/CAT113\\_SarumMassvPrayerBook.pdf](http://archive.churchsociety.org/publications/documents/CAT113_SarumMassvPrayerBook.pdf)>, [accessed 2 June 2019].

<sup>196</sup> Charles Green, *The history, antiquities and geology of Bacton, in Norfolk* (Norwich: Fletcher, 1842), pp. 27-28.

<sup>197</sup> Erasmus, *Praise of Folly*, p. 268.



The second category are pen exercises. These mainly appear as copies of printed text and inscriptions or words that appear unrelated to adjacent texts. They occurred principally in the Bacton copy. 'The first tome' in white letter type on the frontispiece has been faithfully copied, as has the name 'Katherina' in the title of the translator's preface to Queen Katherine.<sup>198</sup> The black letter page title of Mark fol. 55<sup>v</sup>. has also been imitated by angular strokes in a marginal word: 'paraphrase.' Some marks that may appear as pen exercises, such as the number '8', written twenty-two times in three lines may have been talismanic or devotional.<sup>199</sup> Similarly, pen strokes and complex swirls, particularly those located in bottom margins, such as Ranworth's Luke fol. 157<sup>r</sup>, can also be classified as devotional markings.

The practice of cross-referencing is also apparent. Scriptural cross-references have been added to just some of the examined copies. This may be due in part to the inclusion of printed cross-references in the margins of later versions of the 1548 and more fully in the 1552 editions. Although cross-referencing was recognised as a valuable technique in sixteenth-century Biblical studies and would appear prominently in the Geneva Bible, inscribed usage is often absent or unclear in the Norfolk parishes represented in this study. One example occurs in the Ranworth copy, possibly accidentally, as the left part of the inscription is missing and may have spilled over from another sheet of paper. Commenting on Erasmus's paraphrase on the calling of Simon Peter, James and John in Luke 5.8-10, the reader adds their own, slightly adapted parallel from Psalm 127.1.<sup>200</sup> However, other marginal notes, such as 'God' and 'love for neighbour' may cross-reference with other sources. The tradition of keeping commonplace books, such as Robert Reyne's from the nearby village of Acle in the fifteenth century, had become part of Protestant practice and passages from the *Paraphrases* may have found their way into some of these.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Bacton copy, Translator's Preface to Queen Katherine, Mark last fol. <sup>v</sup>.

<sup>199</sup> Bacton copy, Luke fol. 33<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>200</sup> Ranworth copy, Luke fol. 55<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>201</sup> Hannibal Hamlin, 'Reading the Bible in Tudor England', Oxford Handbooks Online (2015), pp. 10-14. < <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/>>, [accessed 21 June 2016]. *Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes of Acle: An Edition of Tanner MS. 407*, ed. by Cameron Louis, (London: Garland, 1980).

Cross-referencing may also lie behind the use of multiple bookmarks. Two volumes retain fragments of yellow ribbon markers that may originally have been attached to their binding, and additional markers included blades of grass and strips of paper cut from leaf margins. Three leaves of the Shipdham copy have been cut this way in a single action, implying that the reader needed to keep track of three references simultaneously, presumably within the volume. A paper strip of similar dimensions but different cutting profile was also discovered inside the Shipdham copy. Folded page corners may also have been used for this purpose. The example of marked references to John the Baptist that occur in a number of copies may illustrate this type of cross-referencing, in the absence of inscribed marks on leaves linking passages.

Sherman's category of lectern instructions related to lectern Bibles, treating markings that indicated the beginning and ending of lectionary passages and the set days for groups of psalms as liturgical, implies a principal use in public worship. This has been considerably broadened in the case of the *Paraphrases*. Essentially, the markings in the examined volumes could mostly be described as lectern instructions, even if inscribed in other locations and on flat surfaces. Unlike their Latin counterpart, the English *Paraphrases* seldom occur in wills and private inventories.<sup>202</sup> The English *Paraphrases* were generally co-owned and publicly displayed.

Although the *Paraphrases* often shared lecterns or desks with the Great Bible, their connection with the liturgy was implicit in Injunctions but also unclear. Although only the *Homilies* were allowed to be read in place of the sermon, Craig cites evidence of the *Paraphrases* being read aloud by clergy during Sunday services in the 1560s and argues that the same may have applied in the Edwardian period.<sup>203</sup>

Through examination of each volume it is possible to discern, however speculatively, apparent reading strategies. Lengthy passages that show little or no sign of use may indicate that particular volumes had been read in a thematic rather than systematic

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<sup>202</sup> Craig, 'Forming a Protestant Consciousness?', in *Holy Scripture Speaks*, ed. by Pabel and Vessey, pp. 316-60 (p. 332-33). Craig surveyed ninety-four inventories in Norwich and found just three records: CRO, Norwich Invs. 9/45, 17/13 and 7/242.

<sup>203</sup> Craig, 'Forming a Protestant Consciousness?', in *Holy Scripture Speaks*, ed. by Pabel and Vessey, pp. 316-60 (pp. 333-34).

manner, as they could have been, for example, in order to support instruction on passages following the pattern of the Prayer Book lectionary.

Specific references to the Prayer Book Eucharistic lectionary occur in the Ashby St Mary copy, where the beginning and endings of the gospel readings for the fourth and fifth Sundays after the Epiphany, Matthew 8.23-34 (Jesus calms a storm and heals a demoniac) and 13.24-30 (the parable of wheat and tares) respectively, are inscribed and marked exactly (Plate X). Inscriptions made in sixteenth-century secretary hand indicate the beginning of the Biblical passages, ‘the gospel on ye iiij [and v] Sunday of the Epiphani.’ The ending of the paraphrase on the last verse of the reading for the fifth Sunday is helpfully marked ‘here yt ende.’<sup>204</sup> The inscriptions are written in the same sixteenth-century hand and presumably relate to consecutive Sundays in the same year. Based on the date of Easter, there would have been a fifth Sunday after Epiphany in one of the following years- 1552, 1563, 1571, 1574, 1585, 1590. These marked inscriptions do not imply that weekly eucharists would have been celebrated in Ashby St. Mary, but rather that the Eucharistic readings were being used at Ante-communion.<sup>205</sup> There are no other markings between them to indicate a further selection of lectionary-based text, but Erasmus’s paraphrase on Jesus’ parable of the wheat and tares would have offered a complete rhetorical passage, suitable to be read aloud. In this paraphrase, Erasmus likens the wheat to those who have received the gospel wholeheartedly and consequently behave in a manner worthy of the kingdom of heaven, in contrast to the ‘naughtie cockelles [weeds]’ who fail to profess a gospel-based faith purely and sincerely. However, Erasmus argues

They which thinke that the false apostles and chief heretikes should be but suffered out of the way with sworde and death, where as the good man of the howse willeth not ye they shoulde be killed, but suffered yf happe be that they

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<sup>204</sup> Ashby copy, Matthew fols 37<sup>r</sup>, 57<sup>v</sup>, 58<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>205</sup> Ante-communion followed the liturgy of the Book of Common prayer Communion service as far as the prayer for the Church militant, ending with a collect and blessing rather than proceeding to the Eucharistic prayer and distribution of the sacrament. During the sixteenth century it was commonly referred to as the second service, following matins and the litany. The 1559 Act of Uniformity required these three services to be offered weekly in every parish on Sunday mornings, but this was generally truncated apart from major festivals in the Church’s calendar. See ‘Ante-communion’, E.C. Whitaker, *A New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. by J.G. Davies (London: SCM, 1986), pp. 23-24.

repent, and be turned from cockelles into wheat. And that if they repent not, they shoulde be kepte and preserved to their judge, of whom once they shall be punished.<sup>206</sup>

The thrust of Erasmus's paraphrase on the passage is one of acceptance of difference, even in matters pertaining to eternal salvation. It is remarkable that this text should have been studied and possibly expounded within worship or instruction in the parish of Bacton, as it was used by Erasmus as a text to justify toleration of heresy. For Erasmus, tares represented heresy, not heretics themselves, and their ability by God's grace to turn into wheat contradicted reformed teaching on predestination.<sup>207</sup> Erasmus remained a highly popular author in England between Henry VIII's reign and Elizabeth I's, and the minister of Bacton may therefore have been familiar with his works.<sup>208</sup> Even if not, use of this passage may reflect their personal inclination or the means to address local divisions.

In the same copy, perhaps coincidentally, the Biblical text ending of Mark 5.18-20, where Jesus departs from the land of the Gerasenes by boat, is marked possibly by a different hand 'joyn barke.' This may be a reference to Jesus joining the ship.<sup>209</sup> Mark's parallel account introduces a dialogue between Jesus and the healed demoniac that does not appear in Matthew 8. This personal encounter may have provided an additional text for a homily or talk on the subject of the lectionary reading, or possibly an ending, as Jesus tells the healed man, 'go to thyne owne house and to thy frendes, and shewe them how great thynges the lorde hath done for the, and howe he hath compassion on thee.'<sup>210</sup> Interest in transformational personal encounters with Christ, particularly by those on the margins of Israel or outside his group of followers, is evident in several places through such notations. It could be argued that these examples helped to stress evangelical belief

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<sup>206</sup> Bacton copy, Matthew fols. 60<sup>v</sup> and r.

<sup>207</sup> Peter G. Bietenholz, *Encounters with a Radical Erasmus: Erasmus' Work as a Source of Radical Thought in Early Modern Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2009), pp. 96-97.

<sup>208</sup> Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom*, p. 332.

<sup>209</sup> Ashby copy, Mark fol. 143<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>210</sup> Ashby copy, Mark fol. 143<sup>v</sup> (Mark 5.19).

in the real possibility of direct contact with Jesus that evangelicals argued was the basis of true faith.

The Shipdham copy contains a lectionary-specific passage that is marked in a clear and consistent manner. The text in Matthew 6.24-34 (parable of slave and two masters, consider the lilies of the field), the gospel reading for the 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity in the Prayer Book eucharistic lectionary. Nine sections of the paraphrase, rather than the Biblical text, are marked with a vertical line at the beginning end of each excerpt, with a cross in the margin to indicate their beginning and a dash against the last line. This passage could be read verbatim as a homily or lecture. Erasmus's original intention to reach the whole of society with his New Testament translation and paraphrases is reflected in their style, which would be accessible to personal study and mixed reading groups of literate and illiterate. However, Dodds also describes the *Paraphrases* as 'a series of evangelical orations', stressing their performative nature.<sup>211</sup>

In addition to these lectionary-specific references, passages marked 'begin here' and 'end here', instructions observed by Sherman in lectern Bibles, either verbally or with the ubiquitous manicule, also occur in a number of the surveyed *Paraphrases*. The Ranworth copy contains two lengthy passages that have been extensively underlined and indicated by marginal notation, Luke 19.2-10 and John 3.3-21,34-6.<sup>212</sup> The marker of the story of Zaccheus appears to follow Erasmus's dictums, underlining particular names, similies and rhetorical flourishes. They did not wrap underlining from one line to another, so that only parts of clauses are marked. Therefore, it must be assumed that inclusion of surrounding text was intended to be used after the lines had drawn the reader's attention to them. The result offers a discourse on the encounter between Jesus and a tax collector, Zaccheus, that results in the latter's conversion. The marker draws on Erasmus's paraphrase rather than the Biblical text, beginning with the tax collector's genuine desire to see Jesus and inward ability to perceive or 'see' him in a way that his seemingly righteous opponents could not. Zaccheus, a 'little lowe' man, climbed a tree in order to see Jesus over the heads of the crowd, 'as good as it had been in a pulpit.' The marker was possibly trying to leaven his message with a modicum of Erasmus's wit here. In

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<sup>211</sup> Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, p. 6.

<sup>212</sup> Ranworth copy, Luke fols 143<sup>v</sup>-146<sup>r</sup>, John fols 18<sup>r</sup>-22<sup>v</sup>.

order to reach the Zaccheuses of this world, Jesus ‘hymselfe afterward clymed up to the wood of the crosse standyng aloft of a great heighth.’<sup>213</sup>

This unspecified cross-reference to John 3.14-5, is significant, as the passage it comes from is underlined in the same or very similar hand to Luke 19. The contrast between those who see Jesus but cannot ‘see’ who he truly is and those whose reception is complete, another strongly Johannine theme, is expounded here. Zaccheus, the sinful publican, sees Jesus and is seen by him in return and granted salvation. The erstwhile righteous, particularly the Pharisees, do not receive him and mislead others who seek him. Udall’s metaphorical association of the Pharisees with the Catholic Church may be behind the underlinings that emphasise black habits, copes, coloured vestments and white robes – in short, the clothing of monks or friars, now regarded as false and irrelevant teachers and mediators between Christ and the Christian laity.

Zaccheus’s ‘dedes [...] of feith and charitie,’ gifts to the poor and recompense for his former victims, are far in excess of the Pharisees’ tithes in their value and consequences. Through single-minded faith in Christ and its expression in true devotion and personal sacrifice, Zaccheus once again inherits the promises made to his forefather, Abraham. This pathway, the marker concludes, is open to anyone ready to amend their former life and ‘embrace the doctrin of the ghospell’, as proclaimed by Erasmus and the *Homilies*, that they too may become Abraham’s heirs.

Shifts away from mediated relationships of faith, from the adornment of church buildings and the liturgy towards communal amity and care for the poor, the precedence of repentance over works and the discovery of the true image of Christ present in this marked passage appear to reflect an early evangelical agenda for change in parish life. However strong the possibility appears that this passage was intended to be read to others, the question arises as to what that context would be. This part of Luke 19 was not read as part of the Prayer Book’s Eucharistic lectionary, so would not have been spoken about at the Lord’s Supper or Ante-Communion. The passage of Luke 18.31-19.11 would have been read in church each year at Morning Prayer on St Mark’s Day, April 25, but unless it fell on Sunday, the presence of a sizeable congregation would be unlikely in

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<sup>213</sup> Ranworth copy, Luke fol. 144<sup>r</sup>.

most parishes. Therefore, it would be more likely that its use in this instance would be extra-liturgical.

Whilst Craig correctly considers the liturgical implications of the English *Paraphrases*, its origins lay in the Latin university text it had quickly become and the majority of markings appear to have been didactic or devotional rather than liturgical. Their role as teaching aids should also be considered within this category. There would have been opportunities for the *Paraphrases* to be used for instruction, particularly on Sunday afternoons, when clergy were required by the 1559 Injunctions and urged by their bishops to provide instruction for the young, to which older members of the parish were also invited.<sup>214</sup> In a reversal of social norms, the young were seen as untainted by the Catholic past and therefore suitable role models for their otherwise elders and betters. The temporary transformation of church into schoolroom, albeit relieved of the discipline of studying classical languages, listening to the New Testament explained by the celebrated scholar Erasmus, must have given the parish audience a sense of gaining an education. Perceived by Udall and others as someone who had successfully leapfrogged over medieval Scholasticism to reach back to the Patristic age, the 1547 Royal Injunctions for Cathedrals ranked Erasmus alongside the Latin and Greek Doctors of the Church.<sup>215</sup>

Whilst Sherman observes numbering and dates as separate marking categories, neither were found to be plentiful in the examined volumes. Occasional ink inscriptions appear in margins to emphasise numbers within the printed text. One striking example occurs in the St. George Colegate copy. This volume reveals the concerns and interests of two markers from the sixteenth-century and the 1630s, based on handwriting style and inscribed dates for the latter writer. The earlier writer inscribed ‘ij thinges’ in the margin next to Erasmus’s paraphrase on Matthew’s narrative on the institution of the Last Supper. In Jesus’ sharing of both the bread and cup with his disciples, this paramount example was presented to an English lay audience who would have been introduced to

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<sup>214</sup> Norman Jones, *The English Reformation*, p. 172.

<sup>187</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 135. Item eight required cathedrals to create libraries containing ‘St Augustine’s, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Theophylact, Erasmus, and other good writers’ works’.

<sup>188</sup> Colegate copy, Matthew fol. 117<sup>v</sup>. Matthew 26.27-29.

this practice in the same year as the English *Paraphrases*' publication. The marker's inscription echoes Erasmus's two points that explain its meaning:

Jesus did institute and consecrate this secrete signe and memoriall in two things, by the whiche, amitie among men is wont to be intertayned: that the charitie by which Christ gave himself to his, should couple us together also: who often tymes eate together of one breade, and drinke of one cuppe. And also showyng by a certain spirituall figure, the rites and manners of Moses his lawe, in the whiche was not purgation of sinne, but by bloud of the sacrifice: furthermore signifyng that he dyd consecrate a new leage of the evangelicall profession by this mistery.<sup>216</sup>

Erasmus's spiritualized and allegorical interpretation bears little or no relation to the enacted sacrificial drama of the Mass that the Prayer Book Lord's Supper supplanted. However, in the absence of an official homily to teach new eucharistic doctrines, Erasmus's text may have helped fill this obvious hermeneutical gap.

This marker made extensive use of 'n', presumably meaning *nota*, beginning with this mark in Erasmus's introduction to Matthew 1 against Erasmus's observation that 'whoever desireth true, perfect and everlasting felicity, let them receyve this gospel, this plesaunt and mery tidings, with mery and cheerful hartes.'<sup>217</sup> The 'n' notations convey the interests of someone with an evangelical attitude to the scriptures, with particular interest in the character of Joseph and penitential challenge of John the Baptist, Jesus's parables, healings and exorcisms, the inner vision that makes faith possible, as well as elements of Erasmus's paraphrasing that supported the new Eucharistic practices of the Order for Communion and Prayer Book. The marker also notes the paraphrase in Mark's gospel on Jesus's directions to his disciples on the Passover feast, leading them to the Upper Room where 'the last and mysticall souper' will be held.<sup>218</sup>

From the perspective of this study, it is unfortunate that date markings occur very rarely, except for occasional copied dates on title pages. It is perhaps worth noting that they are

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<sup>217</sup> Colegate copy, Matthew fol. 20<sup>v</sup> (Matthew 1).

<sup>218</sup> Colegate copy, Mark fol. 89<sup>r</sup> (Mark 14.16).



always recorded in Western Arabic numerals rather than the Roman numerals that were generally used in the early sixteenth century, a small example of a paradigm shift from medieval Gothic to humanist forms. In the Colegate copy, the date 1633 occurs twice in marginal positions, in Udall's preface dedicated to Edward VI, and Erasmus's paraphrase on the Magi's leading to the infant Christ by the Bethlehem star.<sup>219</sup>

No evidence has emerged from the Edwardian or Elizabethan Churches that the *Paraphrases* and *Homilies* were placed as texts in creative tension in order to advance theological understanding or debate – in fact such things were feared and largely suppressed by officialdom. Rather, the *Paraphrases* would have been of greatest use if they were seen as backing up the lectionary and liturgy, dealing with specific issues and interpreting Biblical in such a way that did not disrupt officially ordained articles of faith. Erasmus' words did at times contradict these, but their presence in churches was just one anomaly among many inconsistencies that the young Church of England lived with.

Different marking strategies appear in the same volume, possibly reflecting different readers' styles. Given the range of uses and interests inscribed in books of hours, it would not be realistic to suggest that the *Paraphrases* were studied solely for their value in Biblical exegesis. 'The crocodile', a marginal note in the Ashby St Mary volume next to Udall's reflection on its nature, suggests that the book may also have taken on some aspects of the commonplace book and bestiary.<sup>220</sup> Taking the common knowledge derived from bestiaries, 'beynge a beast in the fload of the Nilus in Egypte', Udall departs from its customary representation as a symbol of human hypocrisy. Instead, he highlights its believed characteristic 'that if one pursue hym to suppress hym, he fleeth and will not abyde: and if ye flee, than will the crocodile folowe and overtake you.' Udall uses this as a metaphor for the nature of glory, bestowed eternally on the modest Queen Katherine by her spiritual foundation 'on the rocke of goddes worde'.<sup>221</sup> This text's marking may signify the noting down of a useful aphorism, a personal interest in natural

<sup>219</sup> Colegate copy, Udall's Preface to Edward VI fol. 7<sup>v</sup>. Matthew fol. 26<sup>r</sup> (Matthew 2.9-10).

<sup>220</sup> Ashby St Mary copy, translator's preface to Queen Katherine, 1<sup>st</sup> fol. <sup>r</sup>.

<sup>221</sup> Ashby St Mary copy. *Bestiary, being an English version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford M.S. Bodley 764 with all the original miniatures reproduced in facsimile*, trans. by Richard Barber (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), pp. 61-62.

history or desire to learn from God through creation, a desire to demonstrate erudition, to name just a few obvious reasons.

One of the most profound pieces of evidence of personal engagement with Erasmus's text occurs in the Bacton copy. At the end of Luke's gospel, a set of harvest accounts has been inscribed in the margins of the final leaf and the first leaf of the translator's dedication of John's gospel.<sup>222</sup> At first glance, the location appears to be an opportunistic use of a scarce resource, blank paper. However, the list of payments to servants, of ploughing and harrowing, of ten round carriage trips to Dilham and so on come to a remarkable reckoning in the same hand in the bottom margin: 'from all evil good lord deliver me and from sudden death. Amen.' The amen is endorsed by a multiple 'S' protection mark, intended to ward away evil, and a Latin inscription '*noli tangere sator*', meaning 'do not touch the sower.' The connection between the reckoning of harvest accounts and the final reckoning of the unknown farmer's destiny, or possibly a parson's if these are glebe accounts, on the day of judgement can be made by reference to Luke 12.15-21. In that passage Jesus offers a parable to the crowd which is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. Its message was a warning 'to take hede, & beware of covetousnesse. For no man's life standeth in the aboundaunce of the thinges which he possesseth.'<sup>223</sup> Jesus tells the story of a rich farmer in possession of an abundant harvest, whose self-satisfied response is to pull down his barns and build bigger ones, so that he might relax and enjoy life in the years ahead. Instead, God speaks to him: 'Thou foole, this night wil thei fetch awai thy solle again from thee. Then whose shal those thinges bee, which thou hast provided?' Jesus concludes, 'so it is with him ye gathereth rychesse to himself, & is not riche toward god.'<sup>224</sup> The accounts' presence in a parochial book is intriguing. It is possible that they are glebe accounts, written on the empty space at the end of a section by an incumbent, but it is also conceivable that the volume may have passed from private to parochial ownership at a later date.

The passage itself is not marked in the Bacton copy, nor would there have been space in its narrow margins to hold the farmer's accounts. Although sheer coincidence cannot be ruled out, it is at least fortuitous that the unknown farmer chose to record his harvest

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<sup>222</sup> Bacton copy, Luke fol. 170<sup>v</sup> and Translator's Dedication of St John 1<sup>st</sup> fol.<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>223</sup> Ranworth Copy, Luke fol. 108<sup>v</sup>. Luke 12.15.

<sup>224</sup> Ranworth Copy, Luke fol. 108<sup>v</sup>. Luke 12.20.

whilst avoiding deadly hubris at the end of Luke. If the placing is non-accidental, it would be a reminder that some of the *Paraphrases* readership's most incisive passages could have been inwardly digested than externally marked.

Before the Reformation, St Barbara would have been the first port of call for Christians desiring to avoid sudden death and the consequences of dying unshriven. The reformed Church of England prohibited the farmer from seeking her intercessory protection from sudden death, so instead he sought spiritual refuge in the printed texts that had replaced the panel paintings and statues of the recent past. Here, devotional expression has not so much been reconfigured but simply transposed from one medium to another.

#### Conclusion.

It is evident that from the perspective of its official instigation and reinstatement that the *Paraphrases* fulfilled several purposes in the evangelical Church of England. It provided a vernacular reference work for less-educated clergy and literate laity and was commended as an authoritative expansion on New Testament scriptures. Therefore, it was offered as a moderating text that set parameters on their Biblical exegesis. Its intended presence in every parish and collegiate church as a necessary item connected with worship, reinforced by visitation articles, made it one of the marks of conformity. The translators' prefaces do more than re-define Erasmus as an anti-papal evangelical sympathiser. They present a memory of the recent past as a struggle to free the gospel message from its pre-Reformation prison. The interior, imageless *Philosophia Christi* that pervades Erasmus's *Paraphrases* embodies a decency in devotional practice and social living that would not lead to civil unrest. However, this simply describes intentions rather than its actual impact. Examination of the copies' use and abuse has provided a stronger sense of their effectiveness in achieving these aims.

The existence of multiple copies of the Edwardian English *Paraphrases* identify it as one of the great survival stories of the early English Reformation period. However, their survival offers ambiguous evidence of their perceived value. Although the copies examined for this chapter showed evidence of wear and tear, they were not used to the

point of disintegration that ended the existence of most sixteenth-century parochial copies of the Prayer Book. Conversely, they were sufficiently regarded that they were not thrown away. Their markings reveal that they were by and large subject not just to the scholarly annotations commended by Erasmus himself, but also intense personal responses. Their readership was also responsible for signs of casual or negligent handling. The reading practices described in this chapter would have blurred the boundaries between deliberate and accidental marking at times. However, their presence is nevertheless evidence that these volumes had lain open at that page and presumably been looked at. Although they were clearly utilised to varying degrees, there is no evidence to support the assertion that the *Paraphrases* were ignored anywhere.

The methodologies engendered by material culture studies have uncovered the existence of this parochial audience, if not the exact identity of most individual readers. The range of markings surveyed in the Ranworth and Dean and Chapter copies suggest a range of uses from didactic and quasi-liturgical to private study and devotion, from congregational to individual. Overall, marked responses span a period of some eighty or more years from the publication dates, and although lack of date inscriptions and inexact palaeographical analysis cannot establish exactly when markings were made, it is possible in some instances to link them to periods of intense interest in Erasmus's work – the Edwardian period, the early Elizabethan settlement, the 1590s and 1630s.

In his early writings, Devereux dismissed the *Paraphrases*' impact in sixteenth-century England. However, within a few years he argued that although its readership could not be identified, the book would have been widely read and considerably influential.<sup>225</sup> Recent scholarship by Craig has gathered some suggestive primary source evidence for their use, and the material turn in the humanities has enabled the annotated *Paraphrases* to be viewed as self-referential texts.

Apart from rare dated references and handwriting analysis, it is hard to discern whether Erasmus was read continuously or episodically between the 1540s and 1630s. The lesser number of markings in 1552 edition copies suggests that much of the *Paraphrases*' use

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<sup>225</sup> E.J. Devereux, 'Sixteenth Century Translations of Erasmus' New Testament', *Collected Works of Erasmus*, ed. by Robert Sider, 89 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1984), XLII, p. xxxiv.

occurred in the Edwardian period. Similarly, the markings resemble late medieval mural graffiti, rather than examples of the seventeenth century.<sup>226</sup> The appearance of multiple incised lines, probably made by styluses, on the Paston, Ranworth and other copies in the manner of pre-Reformation church graffiti reveals that established devotional practices continued in the new material idiom of the parochial printed book. Thus, the graffiti-style markings in the *Paraphrases* appear to demonstrate a continuity of personal expression, transferred from image and symbol-decorated walls to the word-based evocations of faith in newly-ordained lectern or desk-library books. Champion describes church graffiti as crucial in recovering the lost voices of the medieval village, transcending the boundaries of class, gender, clergy and laity, telling ‘tales of grief and loss, of love and humour [...] of religious devotion and fear of damnation.’<sup>227</sup>

The markings explored in this grouping of *Paraphrases* reveal the sound if not always the sense of these lost village voices. However much the markings and signs of wear refute academic arguments that the *Paraphrases* were an irrelevance in the developing post-Reformation parish, it is harder to state how exactly the markers of the examined copies understood and related to the passages they studied and shared. The Renaissance literature scholar Hannibal Hamlin highlights the greater but also this more intractable issue than the reading habits of the *Paraphrases*’ original audience, which was how they interpreted what they read.<sup>228</sup>

Rather than viewing the *Paraphrases* as a conservative, consensus-supporting text that quickly became anachronistic in the Edwardian Church, their survival and subsequent readership indicates a continuing place for Erasmian theology in England. The chameleon-like qualities of his scholarship enabled it to quietly co-exist with humanist theology in Catholic England, as his English translators also did. His flexibility also assured the *Paraphrases*’ restored position alongside reformed theology in the Calvinist climate of the Elizabethan Church. Despite considerable divergence between Erasmus’s and Calvin’s soteriology, it would be impossible to remove humanist influences from the

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<sup>226</sup> Champion, *Medieval Graffiti*, pp. 201-03.

<sup>227</sup> Champion, *Medieval Graffiti*, p. xii.

<sup>228</sup> Hamlin, ‘Reading the Bible in Tudor England’, p. 14.

latter's works.<sup>229</sup> Just as scholars have come to terms with the uneasy co-existence of rationalism and humanism within Calvin's *oeuvre*, it is time to reconsider the *Paraphrases*' continuing presence within the English Church as an active rather than passive ingredient in parochial study.<sup>230</sup>

The impetus behind Erasmus's desire to spread knowledge of the gospels throughout Christendom and beyond was his belief that this would bring peace. In his *Paraclesis* of 1516, Erasmus argued that such knowledge, held by all levels of society, would render conflict between Christians impossible. This humanist freedom to anyone to read the scriptures aloud, even during divine service was permitted in England from 1539 to 1543, when an Act of Parliament restricted lay scripture reading to gentlemen of means. Never again would the scriptures and civil and ecclesiastical authorities be placed at this risk in England. When the 1543 restrictions were lifted under Edward VI, the *Paraphrases* were to be placed near the Bible, so that an authoritative interpretation of the core texts were readily available to refute error. Erasmus had remained a loyal Catholic but was already dead, so his textual contribution to the Edwardian and Elizabethan reformations could be mediated without fear of contradiction. Having been placed on the Roman Inquisition's Index of 1559 of prohibited authors, in which his New Testament paraphrases were specifically listed, Erasmus's legacy was most readily naturalised into Protestant England.<sup>231</sup>

It is clear from Udall's preface that Erasmus was intended to be the moderating authority for New Testament studies in Tudor England. This official expectation appears to have

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<sup>229</sup> William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1989), pp. 3, 230-31. Bouwsma argues that the influence of Calvin's intellectual cradling is crucial to understanding the paradoxes of his theology. He identifies 'two Calvins', one rationalist and the other humanist, co-existing uneasily within his works.

<sup>230</sup> Following his conversion in 1533, Calvin continued to read and admire Erasmus. See Robert M. Linder, 'Calvinism and Humanism: The First Generation', *Church History*, 44, 2 (June 1975), 167-181 (p. 174).

<sup>231</sup> *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1559), <<http://www.aloha.net/~mikesch/ILP-1559.htm#Erasmus>>, [accessed 24 January 2017]. The early book specialist Margaret Lane Ford's survey of privately-owned printed books in Britain before 1557 reveals that although Erasmus's works were widely acquired by Scottish book owners, his New Testament *Annotationes* were predominant rather than his *Paraphrases*, which were more popular in England. Margaret Lane Ford, 'Private ownership of printed books', *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by Hellinga and Trapp, III, pp. 220-22.

realised locally. The wide range and occurrence of markings in the Ranworth and Dean and Chapter copies offer evidence of serious engagement by laity as well as clergy.

The corpus of the *Paraphrases*'s markings allows fresh consideration of the arguments proposed by the medieval historian James McConica, Devereux and John Yost in the 1960s and 1970s, that the English reformation was uniquely Erasmian in character. Erasmus did not possess Luther's or Calvin's charismatic qualities of leadership, nor did he seek to establish a separate religious movement. Instead, Erasmus sought to reconcile Christians whose beliefs were violently opposed. Whilst these academic arguments lack compelling evidence and have been largely discounted, Erasmus's influence evidently persisted. The Dutch medieval historian Johann Huizinga wrote of Erasmus that his cultural influence was extensive rather than intensive.<sup>232</sup> It is this extensive presence that was most widely represented in the English *Paraphrases*. They offered the reader an alternative perspective on free will and predestination, the sacraments and the extent to which key Christian doctrines could be treated as *adiaphora*.

Arguably, his posthumous reconfiguration as a covert evangelical added an ingredient that prevented the Church of England defining itself as a single theological stream. The theological ambiguities created by official maintenance of the *Paraphrases* in a period of Calvinist ascendancy need to be acknowledged, even if it is difficult to assess their effect at the time. In some ways Erasmus's emphasis on inner faith and accommodation of conflicting ideologies may have been considered helpful in an age when outward conformity was valued more widely than personal integrity. This would become more apparent in the following century, as anti-Calvinists like Lancelot Andrewes and Richard Montagu developed Erasmus's free will and *adiaphora* arguments in an attempt to marginalize the doctrine of predestination.<sup>233</sup> The disconnection between the theology of the *Paraphrases* and Thirty-Nine Articles did not appear to attract period comment. However, a period reader of both texts could only ignore their fundamental differences as an act of will.

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<sup>232</sup> Johann Huizinga, *Erasmus of Rotterdam: With a Selection from the Letters of Erasmus* (Garden City: Phaidon, 1952), p. 190.

<sup>233</sup> Dodds, *Exploiting Erasmus*, pp. 197-98.

Chapter two.

The 1567 communion cup and its role in the process of Reformation in Ranworth.

In his 1567 Visitation Articles for Norwich Diocese, Archbishop Matthew Parker enquired of the diocesan clergy, ‘Whether your curates or ministers [...] do minister in any profane cups, bowls, dishes or chalice hereforeto used at the Mass, or else in a decent Communion cup and kept for the same purpose only.’<sup>234</sup>

In response to the impending visits by the Archbishop’s commissioners, hundreds of Norfolk and Suffolk parishes replaced their chalices with new communion cups. Most of the Norfolk cups were made by members of the newly re-founded Norwich Goldsmiths’ Company. The Ranworth communion cup is dated 1567 and is typical in many ways of that year’s frenetic local production (Plate XI). The cup has been in continuous use in St. Helen’s Church since then. Despite signs of wear and reconstruction, it yields important information about the incremental processes by which the English Reformation came to Ranworth and, by implication, to hundreds of other East Anglian parishes.

The imposition of new communion cups in Norwich Diocese within a few years represents conformity on a massive scale. Churchwardens in over a thousand parishes handed over the chalices in their care in order to purchase the new eucharistic vessels. In doing so, they acknowledged the moderating authority of bishops to order the sacramental life of parish churches in an era where the model of episcopal authority was facing significant challenges. In the wholesale destruction of pre-Reformation chalices, a kind of physical discontinuity was achieved in order to reconnect the Church of England to the practices of the Apostolic and Patristic eras of the Church.

The 1567 Ranworth communion cup was an object born of the English Reformation. Its genre is always referred to as cups, rather than chalices. In the Elizabethan Church of England, the word ‘chalice’ was indelibly tainted with all the connotations of the Catholic mass. Although in current ecclesiastical terminology chalice and communion cup are broadly interchangeable, this does not reflect a period understanding of the objects in question. Despite their common Latin root, only in the 1560 Latin version of

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<sup>234</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 199.



the Book of Common Prayer could a reformed communion cup be called a *calix*.<sup>235</sup>

Where the word chalice appears in this thesis it will denote a pre-Reformation communion cup.

This chapter will consider the 1567 Ranworth Communion cup and its paten, which would also have functioned as cup cover, from five interlocking perspectives. These are intended to give an all-round view of the artefact and its period significance. The first perspective is provided by the articles and injunctions that enforced the replacement of pre-Reformation chalices with Protestant communion cups. This section will demonstrate the importance placed on physically obliterating previous devotional practices and replacing them with new norms in which the cups would play a moderating function. In his introduction to the Reformation period in *English Church Plate 597-1830*, its greatest authority Charles Oman observes the wholesale destruction or alteration of virtually all Church plate between 1530 and 1580 and its replacement. ‘Protestant church plate was called into existence by a combination of sentimental, utilitarian, and economic forces, the interaction of which is extremely interesting to trace.’<sup>236</sup> Since Oman wrote these words in the 1950s, material culture approaches have enabled the communion cups to be interrogated not just as the products of change, but as active agents, as Alexandra Walsham puts it, in ‘the task of transforming mentalities.’<sup>237</sup>

The second perspective will consider the cup as a manufactured object, as part of a remarkably widespread and distinct genre of provincial Elizabethan plate, created by Norwich goldsmiths who combined commercial interest with evangelical conviction that resulted in an object that harmonised the objectives of Prayer Book worship with Calvinist theology and aesthetics. The new cups and dual-purpose covers that served as lids and also patens for distribution of eucharistic bread were almost the only widespread

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<sup>235</sup> *Liber Precum Publicarum seu Ministerii Ecclesiasticae Administrationis Sacramentorum, Aliorumque Rituum et Cæremoniarum in Ecclesia Anglicana Transcribatur ex editione 1560 a Societate Parkerensis in anno 1847 et de novo transcribitur ex editione Societate Parkerensis a Henrico peccatore* (1999), <[http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Latin1560/BCP\\_Latin1560.htm](http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Latin1560/BCP_Latin1560.htm)>, [accessed 21 July 2018]. The Latin text was intended for use in university colleges and also used in Cornwall, for the benefit of Cornish speakers.

<sup>236</sup> Charles Oman, *English Church Plate 597-1830* (London: Oxford University, 1957), pp. v, 129.

<sup>237</sup> Walsham, ‘History, Memory, and the English Reformation’, p. 907.

manifestations of reformed English church plate. The longevity of ecclesiastical plate was an exception to the usual conventions of early modern plate ownership. With the possible exception of family heirlooms, plate's worth was derived from intrinsic bullion value, guaranteed by hallmarking, rather than its artistic provenance or historical interest until the late eighteenth century.<sup>238</sup> Old items tended to be scrapped as fashions changed. In contrast, communion plate was the property of elected churchwardens by virtue of their office only, who therefore had little reason or spare funds to replace it. Wealthy laity, whose ancestors gave copious gifts and bequests of ecclesiastical plate for the good of their souls had now been informed that such practices were irrelevant to their salvation. These factors, together with the possibility that the cups acquired a kind of heirloom status through their long association with their parish churches has bequeathed a large genre of sixteenth-century communion cups.

The third perspective is drawn from cup's principal material, silver. Almost as much as the shape of the cup itself and the wine it contained, silver would have expressed a range of meanings to its users. Period attitudes to this metal were double-edged, reflecting both its purity and potential for idolatry. Nevertheless, it was regarded as the best material for this purpose. This will be explained in relation to period science and alchemical knowledge, with particular reference to sulphur-mercury theory.

The fourth perspective will examine models and resonances offered to an early modern population that was historically unused to receiving the cup at communion and how an interplay between feasting practices and the new eucharistic liturgy may have provided them with insights. The Ranworth cup possessed a single functional role, as vessel and centrepiece of a reformed vernacular liturgy. Although the Norwich cups' shape and function differentiated them from domestic plate, cups and ritualised drinking formed part of secular feasting which may have given their recipients some sense of recognition.

The fifth perspective considers the identity shift that occurred during this period from the uniquely priestly chalice to the shared cup of ministers and laity, identified by its

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<sup>238</sup> 'Norwich silver: the earliest collectors and dealers', lecture given by Christopher Hartsop, at Norwich Cathedral, 13 September 2015. A local period example of the commissioning of heirloom plate occurs in a clause in the will of Thomas Holdiche of Ranworth (1579), which will be examined in Chapter three.

inscription with whole parishes rather than individuals or churches. In this section I shall demonstrate how beyond expressing the communicant's communion with God and their neighbour, the new communion cups expressed religious conformity, parochial affinities and sound morals.

These inner and outer qualities of the new model parishioner were paramount in the officially imposed narratives of the English Reformation, embedded in texts such as the Book of Common Prayer, the *Homilies* and *Paraphrases*, articles and injunctions. They are also embodied in the Ranworth cup. As one of very few tactile objects permitted in the new Church of England, and the only one where oral contact was permitted, I will argue that the cup served as a touchstone that demonstrated conformity, good morals and communal association as well as the parishioner's vessel of grace as they accepted the sign and seal of their salvation.

#### Physical analysis of the Ranworth cup.

The Ranworth communion cup has a height of 155mm and bowl diameter of 101mm. It weighs 7oz Troy (approximately 217.7 grammes). It has a typical East Anglian bell-shaped bowl, connected to a small circular foot by a spool-shaped stem, characteristic of Norwich communion cups and based on stems used on earlier London cups.<sup>239</sup> No assay marks are visible. Three marks are stamped above the inscription band (Plate XII). The orb in a lozenge on the right is the maker's mark of William Cobbold, joint Warden of the Norwich Goldsmith's Company between 1564-65 and 1566-68. The rampant lion surmounted by a castle in the centre is the mark of the Norwich Goldsmiths' Company, based on the city's arms. The 'C' stamp on the left indicates that it was proved in the third year of the Norwich Assay, which began in 1565. The Norwich Goldsmiths' year began on St Dunstan's day, one of the surviving black letter or secondary feasts of the Prayer Book Calendar. Therefore, it can be deduced that the Ranworth cup was assayed between 19 May 1567 and 18 May 1568.

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<sup>239</sup> Mary Inness Fewster, 'East Anglian Goldsmiths: Dimensions of a Craft Community 1500-1750', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of East Anglia, 2004), p. 278.

The bowl bears an inscription within two bands: ‘+THE● TOWNE● OF● RANWORTH 1567’. The band consists of a pair of parallel lines above and beneath the inscription 3mm apart, giving a total bandwidth of 17mm. These lines would have been produced using a lathe, and the central plug in the base of the bowl presumably conceals the hole left by the cup’s attachment to the lathe. The letters are incised Roman capitals and the numerals are Western Arabic, with an average height of 8mm. The 1567 date in the cup’s inscription indicates that it was inscribed some time before the ending of the civil year on the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation, 24 March 1568. This gives a *terminus ante quem* for the cup’s assay of almost two months before the end of the goldsmiths’ year. The continuing use of feast days by goldsmiths and state alike for dating purposes shows how early Protestant England retained the overall rhythm and structure of the Catholic liturgical year, even when divested of most of its masses and holidays.

The spool-shaped stem is decorated top and bottom with a recessed band punched at 2mm intervals, repeated where the two flanges of the foot are joined. The Ranworth foot is a later replacement. Comparison with the Whitlingham communion cup, also made by Cobbold in 1567, suggests that the Ranworth replacement foot was likely to be a copy of Cobbold’s original design, which would have possessed a slightly flatter profile (Plate XIII). The higher dome of the upper section of the base suggests that the foot dates from the eighteenth century onwards. Constant use, and particularly being dropped onto hard surfaces could have damaged the rim of the foot, making it unstable and requiring replacement.

In the absence of churchwardens’ or goldsmiths’ accounts, it is impossible to say with certainty whether the Ranworth cup was originally completely gilded, or had areas highlighted with parcel gilt, as in the case of the Upton communion cup (Plate XIV), or was finished as ‘white’ silver, which would have been the cheapest option. Centuries of abrasive polishing have removed the gilt from many surviving sixteenth-century cups, but a yellow patch below the rim and small areas of identical colour on the lower part of the Ranworth cup’s bowl suggest that its original finish may have been parcel gilt. The absence of any trace of gilding in the inscription band appears to support this hypothesis.

The Ranworth cup as an imposed object.

The first perspective on the Ranworth cup relates to its inception as a product of the material and liturgical outworking of the theological reforms of Edward VI's reign. For the first time in over three centuries, clergy were instructed to administer communion to their congregations in both 'kinds' rather than the host or bread alone. After the reversals of Mary Tudor's reign, the chalice's restoration to the laity in 1559 led to a national campaign of replacing pre-Reformation chalices with new communion cups instigated by Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury. Before considering the Ranworth cup as a product of the Norwich goldsmiths' craft, the physical differences between communion cup and chalice designs should be viewed from the perspectives of episcopal injunction and Parker's Reformed historiography (Plate XV).

Parker was founding President of the Society of Antiquaries, but his selective retention of sequestered early books and manuscripts in his Library reveal him as an antiquarian with ulterior motives. He bolstered or more accurately created an identity for the Anglo-Saxon Church as an independent proto-Church of England. Although Parker did not obtain the licence from the Privy Council that enabled him to acquire around six hundred early manuscripts until 1568, his intention must have already been in his thoughts during the period of the provincial cup replacement programme.<sup>240</sup> His *De Antiquitate Britannicae Ecclesiae* constructs a vision of an early British Church established by Joseph of Arimathea's legendary first-century mission and therefore independent of papal authority. In his idealised account of the Anglo-Saxon era, he portrayed a Church that used proto-evangelical worship including vernacular paternosters, creeds and Decalogue, rejected transubstantiation and offered lay eucharistic reception in both kinds.<sup>241</sup> Despite evangelical emphasis on the authority of scripture as the basis for ordering church life over the traditions of intervening years, most English Christians continued to worry about innovation. In order to counteract this, Parker and his scholarly collaborators invoked the power of precedent in publishing a 'testimonie of antiquitie' to undergird the

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<sup>240</sup> Christopher de Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* (London: Lane, 2016), p. 13.

<sup>241</sup> V.J.K. Brook, *A Life of Archbishop Parker* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), pp. 322-24. See also David J. Crankshaw and Alexandra Gillespie, 'Parker, Matthew (1504-1575)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/21327>>, [accessed 9 April 2019].

eucharistic theology of the Elizabethan Settlement.<sup>242</sup> Although modern scholars generally recognize that the medieval Church's theological and liturgical formation owed much to ninth-century Carolingian renaissance, Parker believed that transubstantiation and other woes of the medieval Church only came to England's shores with William the Conqueror and his successors, 'until the days of King Henry VIII, when religion began to grow better, and more agreeable to the Gospel.'<sup>243</sup> This concept of a middle period separating the apostolic and patristic ages, the 'pure primitive church' in the language of the *Homilies*, from the reformed Church of England in Parker's day inevitably consigned much of medieval material devotional culture to mutilation or destruction.

In the sequestration of church plate by Royal Commissioners in 1552, each church had been allowed to retain a single 'massing chalice.' These would be melted down and replaced by newly designed communion cups, diocese by diocese, in a programme lasting over a decade, beginning in London and Canterbury in 1562 and culminating in Llandaff and Salisbury in 1576.<sup>244</sup> Overseen by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, this programme was one of the most complete iconoclastic exercises undertaken within the Elizabethan Church of England. As such, the new cups must be largely viewed as belonging to a genre of conformity rather than responses to popular demand.

The chalice replacement campaign that Parker instigated was as much about the destruction of pre-Reformation chalices as creating new cups. Duffy argues that iconoclasm was a central, sacramental action for sixteenth-century reformers, in which objects that embodied condemned doctrines were purged or obliterated. He describes Edwardian Church leaders as radicals who 'sought with greater urgency the celebration of that sacrament of forgetfulness in every parish in the land.'<sup>245</sup> Truncated by Mary's accession, the 'sacrament of forgetfulness' was re-established and extended in the 1560s to encompass sacramental vessels themselves. Through the fresh production of communion cups, a providential amnesia could settle over the Catholic past. By restoring communion in both kinds to the laity, communicants were enabled to connect with Jesus'

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<sup>242</sup> *A testimonie of antiquitie*, ed. by Parker and Joscelyn, sigs. K3r-4r, cited by Walsham, 'History, Memory and the English Reformation', 898-938 (p. 904).

<sup>243</sup> Brook, *Life of Archbishop Parker*, p. 323.

<sup>244</sup> Oman, *English Church Plate*, pp. 133-46. Oman omits St Asaph and Coventry and Lichfield Dioceses due to insufficient records.

<sup>245</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 480.

actions at the Last Supper, the supreme act of Christian remembrance and re-enact Jesus' command to his disciples: 'Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'<sup>246</sup>

In addition to conformity, the new cups added to the new visual aesthetics of reformed worship. The erasure of medieval imagery and destruction of pre-Reformation artefacts undoubtedly contributed to the communion cups' turn away from Gothic style. This paradigmatic cultural shift, accelerated by the rapid destruction of the pre-Reformation past and introduction of replacement items with new ideological and aesthetic values has been cogently argued by Alexandra Walsham.<sup>247</sup> Charles Jackson, one of the first English ecclesiastical plate historians, observed that surviving pre-Reformation English chalices remained faithful to Gothic style, despite the classical stylistic developments in secular plate from the 1520s onwards.<sup>248</sup> However, the widespread destruction of chalices in the 1560s and 1570s means that it cannot be conclusively stated that there were no English pre-Reformation classically-influenced chalices. Certainly, Edwardian communion cups produced for City of London churches by the London Goldsmiths' Company are the oldest surviving examples of the new, simpler aesthetic. It would be difficult to argue that it was simply coincidence that the Elizabethan cups provided a striking physical and visual outcome for Parker's ecclesiastical reconfiguration project. The change in style that Ranworth's parishioners would have noticed when they first beheld their new cup paralleled the altered meaning of its contents.

Having commenced the chalice replacement programme in his own diocese, Parker made compliance with this injunction a matter for official enquiry in the Visitation Articles he sent out across his province, followed in the northern province by Archbishop Grindal of York in 1571. Oman expresses surprise that this change was driven by Parker, 'who was in many ways so tolerant.'<sup>249</sup> However, what was once seen as pragmatic tolerance in the early English Reformation has been re-defined by Shagan as a regulating and coercive rule by 'moderation.'<sup>250</sup> Archbishop Parker, as the Queen's senior ecclesiastical moderator, was under pressure to produce greater uniformity of doctrine and liturgy. He

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<sup>246</sup> 1 Corinthians 11.25-26.

<sup>247</sup> Walsham, 'History, Memory, and the English Reformation', 898-938.

<sup>248</sup> Charles James Jackson, *Illustrated History of English Plate Ecclesiastical and Secular* (London: Country Life & Batsford, 1911), p. 162.

<sup>249</sup> Oman, *English Church Plate*, p. 134.

<sup>250</sup> Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*, pp. 23-26.

was entrusted with the re-shaping of Cranmer's 'Articles of Religion' into the Thirty-Nine Articles that would be enshrined in statute in 1571 but never rigorously enforced. This set of doctrinal statements delineates the Elizabethan Church of England's idiosyncratic Protestant *via media*, theologically located somewhere between Wittenberg, Geneva and Zurich, with its own native characteristics. In material form, the new communion cups similarly embodied the Church of England's middle way. Stylistically positioned between Lutheran chalices and Calvinist beakers, they contained elements of both designs but resembled neither. In their usage, they were single communal cups like their Lutheran counterparts, but intended to be handled by their recipients, like Calvinist beakers.<sup>251</sup>

Parker's institution of the cup replacement programme may also have been in response to pressure from Elizabeth I to establish uniform liturgical practice from the disarray she perceived to be occurring under her motley collection of bishops. Especially during the early years of Elizabeth's reign, these ranged from conservatives to assured Calvinists. The latter contingent included Bishop Parkhurst of Norwich, a returned Marian exile from Zurich, who 'winketh at schismatics and Anabaptists', according to a report to Elizabeth I's Secretary of State, William Cecil.<sup>252</sup> This diversity was even more pronounced in the sub-episcopal layers of church life. Correspondence between Archbishop Parker and Bishop Grindal of London in 1565 concerning liturgical practice in the city revealed a huge variety in the artefacts accompanying the cup at the eucharist; of trestle tables and joined tables, some placed in the nave, some in the chancel, in similar positions to the former altars or in the middle, orientated north-south, covered by a carpet or left bare, served by clergy in varying combinations of surplices, caps and gowns.<sup>253</sup> The cup, as a relatively standardised centrepiece to these variable feasts, must have provided a strikingly uniform focus.

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<sup>251</sup> The 1559 Communion rubric states: 'Then shall the minister fyrste receive the Communion in bothe kyndes him selfe, and next deliver it to the other Ministers [...] and after to the people in their hands kneling.' *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662*, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), p. 137.

<sup>252</sup> Calvin Lane, 'Before Hooker: The Material Context of Elizabethan Prayer Book Worship', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, LXXIV, 3 (September 2005), 320-356 (p. 334).

<sup>253</sup> Lane, 'Before Hooker', 320-56 (p. 334).



As an object created in response to official injunction, the Ranworth cup belongs to a genre of compliance. It is also a moderating object, in the sense that it tangibly represented episcopal authority overarching and reaching into parish life. Shagan draws attention to the post-Reformation identity of bishops as ‘moderators’ in civil as much as ecclesiastical life, ‘not merely doctors for troubled souls but worldly authorities whose coercive power was authorised by the monarch and the law.’<sup>254</sup> Through the imposition of cups, they were visibly implementing sacramental reform, even if little headway was being made in other areas.

Having begun the chalice replacement programme in his own diocese of Canterbury, Parker turned his attention to London and then Parkhurst’s see, the subject of his 1567 Visitation.<sup>255</sup> Parker’s choice may be indicative of Norwich’s demographic and ecclesiastical importance, or of a continuing affection for his birthplace. Parker’s concern for lack of evangelical progress across his native diocese was also apparent in the annual progress of sermons he instituted in 1567, beginning in Thetford on Rogation Sunday and culminating in Norwich on the Sunday after the Ascension, delivered by the Master or a Fellow of Corpus Christi College.<sup>256</sup> More pragmatically, Norwich bordered London Diocese, where the replacement programme had been undertaken two years earlier. Norwich was also England’s second city economically and like London, possessed a considerable goldsmiths’ company.

Parker’s Visitation Articles for Norwich Diocese reveal much about his quest for moderation. Both the Catholic ‘massing chalice’ and Zwinglian reductionism to using cups of humble domestic origin were to be rejected. In effect, he required churches to possess a *via media* vessel, that reflected values that represented neither Rome nor Zurich. Parker’s intended characteristic of decency for these new vessels suggests a

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<sup>254</sup>Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation*, p. 113. The Church of England bishops of the 1560s may have been, in Shagan’s view, ‘the lynchpin of the conformist system’, but were also facing a growing Presbyterian undercurrent that would surface in the 1572 *Admonition to Parliament*.

<sup>255</sup> Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010), p. 249.

<sup>256</sup> ‘A sermon preached in Norwich Cathedral on the Sunday after Ascension, 5 June 2011, by the Revd James Buxton, Chaplain of Corpus Christi College Cambridge, and 2010/2011 Parker Preacher’, < <http://www.corpus.cam.ac.uk/sermon2/> >, [accessed 12 July 2015].

plain, reverent aesthetic, an outward counterpart to the inward decency of those who received it in their hands.

Whether intentionally or not, Parker's request for decency echoes Calvin's concern for public decency and *decorum*. Although Parker had not gone into exile during Mary Tudor's reign, many of his senior colleagues, including Parkhurst, found shelter in the Calvinist community in Zurich, so it is probable that the latter would have been aware of the Calvinist resonance in his use of the word 'decent.' Calvin's modern biographer William Bouwsma observes that Calvin's inward spirituality did not preclude a concern for external appearances that governed the dress and domestic tastes of many of his followers. Calvin declared that 'as the clothes a man wears or his carriage and gestures sometimes spoil, sometimes enhance the impression he conveys, so *decorum* adorns all his actions.'<sup>257</sup> *Decorum* was often translated into English as meaning 'decent', and the concept also enjoyed favour in humanist circles as a stylistic value through Hermogenes's *Art of Rhetoric*.<sup>258</sup> Calvin's interest in decency was theological but its aesthetic aspects were most likely formed by his early formation as a humanist lawyer. Bouwsma describes Calvin as an inhabitant of 'the Erasmian world of thought' who 'breathed its spiritual atmosphere.'<sup>259</sup> Calvin wrote in his Commentary on 1 Corinthians that 'there is a general decorum that philosophers look upon as an aspect of moderation, and everyone shares in that.'<sup>260</sup> For Calvin, decorum was a rhetorical concept for bridging hermeneutical gaps between one person and another: 'consider the time and what is appropriate to the people.'<sup>261</sup>

Soon after becoming Bishop of Norwich, Parkhurst wished to impose decency in the church interiors of his diocese. Item thirteen of his 1561 Injunctions states that 'they see the places filled up in walls or elsewhere, where images stood, so as if there had been

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<sup>257</sup> Calvin's commentary on 1 Corinthians 11.2, cited by William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1989), p. 194.

<sup>258</sup> Arthur F. Kinney, *Humanist Poetics: Thought, Rhetoric and Fiction in Sixteenth-Century England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1986), p. 283.

<sup>259</sup> Bouwsma, *John Calvin*, p. 13. Hermogenes, *L'Art Rhétorique*, trans. by M. Patillon, (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1997).

<sup>260</sup> Calvin's Commentary on 1 Corinthians, cited by Bouwsma, *John Calvin*, p. 91. 1 Corinthians 7.36.

<sup>261</sup> Calvin's Commentary on Matthew, cited by Bouwsma, *John Calvin*, p. 116. Matthew 3.

none there [...] and the places where they were set comely and decently to be made up with comely expedition.’<sup>262</sup> Although he skirted around the issue of communion plate at this stage, within a few years the communion cup would also conform to this aesthetic of Reformed decency. The simplicity and lack of imagery in their designs corresponded with an inner decency, untainted by the spiritual harlotry that characterised pre-Reformation worship in their eyes. The new cups could not easily be adapted to allow a return to the practices of the past.

The new cups were decorous bridging objects in more senses than one. They were designed to pass between clergy and laity, and their physical shape bridged the hermeneutical chasm between Catholic and evangelical belief and reception, between massing chalice and Calvinist beaker. William Cobbold made a set of silver Calvinist beakers for the refugee Dutch Church in Norwich, but this shape would perhaps have been a step too far for English churches in the febrile atmosphere of the 1560s. In contrast, a communion cup shape following the precedent of Edwardian London cups that embodied some of the characteristics of Calvin’s decorum matched the need of the times. The Elizabethan Church of England absorbed a large measure of Calvinism without being allowed to become a fully Calvinist entity. This tension is also evident in the new communion cups.

The Ranworth cup as a manufactured object.

The Ranworth cup owed its existence to archiepiscopal injunction. However, it owed its physical form to the Norwich goldsmiths who for commercial and confessional reasons, seized upon the opportunity provided by rapid and widespread commissioning to produce a distinct genre of Elizabethan provincial plate.

The Norwich Company emulated its larger and more prestigious rival, the London Goldsmiths’ Company. It is perhaps significant that the Norwich Goldsmiths’ Company coat of arms was almost identical to the London Company’s, using the same quartered

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<sup>262</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 100.

leopard's head and covered cup with buckles, but in reverse order.<sup>263</sup> As goldsmiths in England's second largest and wealthiest city, the Norwich Company's marks and arms suggest emulation of their larger rival. Norwich goldsmiths also asserted their independence from London by exercising their right of assay, or in other words, to test and hallmark their company's plate.

Shortly before commencing the cup replacement programme, the Norwich Goldsmiths petitioned the Mayor, Aldermen and Council on 2 October 1564 to use the powers of unused. Following an opening address to the Mayor, Sheriffs, Alderman and members of the common City Council, they complained of former abuses within their craft, using rhetoric that paralleled the language of evangelical reform:

Many and diverse absurdities and abuses have heretofore flowed among the said artificers as well concerning the unperfected working of their works of gold as their unfaithful working of their works of silver in such base wise and manner as the like have nowhere been founde.<sup>264</sup>

They argued that 'the Queen's majesties subjects have been thereby greatly deceived and abused to the great defacing and slander of so famous and worthy an art or science', and 'for reformation' of their craft the Norwich Company would enforce the same standards of assay as the London Company.<sup>265</sup> The prime object of the petition appears to have been to secure an important regional market in communion cups. The widespread distribution of surviving communion cups across Norfolk and north Suffolk, interrupted only by pockets around larger towns with resident goldsmiths and London cups

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<sup>263</sup> 'History of the Company', < <https://www.thegoldsmiths.co.uk/company/history> >, [accessed 12 April 2019]. The London Company's arms appear to have originated during the fourteenth century. 'The Bassingham gate, Guildhall', Recording Arc hive for Public Sculpture in Norfolk and Suffolk', < <http://www.racns.co.uk/sculptures> >, [accessed 12 April 2019]. The Norwich Goldsmiths' arms are carved in stone on the Bassingham gate, together with the royal arms of England and the city of Norwich. The gate was moved from the former London Street home of the Norwich goldsmith, John Bassingham, to the south side of Norwich's Guildhall in 1857. Bassingham was active during the reign of Henry VIII and died before the commencement of the Norwich assay. The supporters of the royal arms are the lion and dragon used during the reign of Elizabeth I, which suggests it may not have been erected during his lifetime.

<sup>264</sup> G.N. Barrett, *Norwich Silver and its Marks 1565-1702* (Norwich: Wensum, 1991), pp. 18-19.

<sup>265</sup> Barrett, *Norwich Silver*, p. 19.

purchased for parishes in the southern reaches of Norwich Diocese, shows how successful the Norwich goldsmiths' strategy had proved. Through the exercise of their assay rights, they could guarantee the purity of their materials, produce plate without reference to the London assay office and market them locally, unhindered by London's searchers.

However, it is important to note that the Norwich Goldsmiths' cup designs would owe more to those produced by London goldsmiths during the Edwardian period than their contemporary cups. Elizabethan cups produced by the London company were beaker or tumbler-shaped, with diminutive stems and feet that gave a large bowl capacity in relation to the overall weight of silver. Rather than aping London fashion, East Anglian goldsmiths would design vessels that would bring their own refinement.

The crucial period for cup production in Norwich diocese was 1567-68. Archbishop Parker's Visitation provided an obvious impetus for change. The art historian Mary Fewster's survey of surviving communion cups in the area covered by the sixteenth-century diocese of Norwich reveals that in the first two years of the Norwich Assay only fifteen communion cups were proved, compared with 331 in the goldsmiths' year 1567-68. Clearly there was no desire for change locally until compulsion loomed on the horizon. Conversely, there seems to have been little reticence in complying. Fewster also records that only twenty of the surviving communion cups were assayed at Norwich between 1568 and 1571.<sup>266</sup>

The dated series of assay marks would only last as long as the cup replacement programme, and would be followed, in the phrase of the Norwich silver collector Colin Ticktum, by 'the dark ages of Norwich silver', which lasted from 1575 to the Company's reforms of 1623.<sup>267</sup> However, the Ranworth cup would be the product of a medieval guild that following a brief hiatus had quickly been reformed as a company, whose parish church would become a focus for Puritanism within Norwich.<sup>268</sup> The commercial astuteness of the Norwich goldsmiths did not preclude confessional commitment to the

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<sup>266</sup> Fewster, 'East Anglian Goldsmiths', p. 273.

<sup>267</sup> Only ten ecclesiastical and nineteen secular pieces of identifiable Norwich plate survive from this period. Colin Ticktum, *Norwich Silver: From earliest times to the closure of the Assay in 1702* (Norwich: Ticktum Charitable Trust, 2006), p. 46.

<sup>268</sup> See Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, IV, pp. 290-329

work of producing ‘decent’ cups, especially as they had previously been makers of high quality but ‘idolatrous’ items.

Equally importantly, the new Assay also secured their reputation and restored their integrity. The cup replacement programme no doubt filled their order books for a time, but also enabled them to disseminate examples of their work to potential domestic markets across Norfolk and North Suffolk. Goldsmiths were metalworkers of the highest rank, but prior to the Reformation had produced devotional and liturgical artefacts that were by the 1560s being denounced as debased, deceptive, absurd and abusive. Like the bishops, the cup replacement programme gave goldsmiths the opportunity to demonstrate that they too were doing something to further the cause of reform.

William Cobbold, who became a Freeman of the Norwich Company in 1552, is regarded as one of the finest provincial English goldsmiths of the period.<sup>269</sup> Although the survival of the Reade Salt attests to Cobbold’s reputation as the most accomplished provincial English goldsmith of his era, he produced many simpler objects such as the Ranworth cup and many others similar to it.<sup>270</sup> Cobbold was joint Warden of the Norwich goldsmiths with William Rogers during the most prolific year of production, 1567-68. As Warden, Cobbold had the authority to assay plate, search goldsmiths’ premises and confiscate and destroy defective goods.<sup>271</sup> It is interesting to note that neither the Ranworth cup, nor the cup belonging to the neighbouring parish of South Walsham St Lawrence, bear the characteristic Netherlandish-style zigzag gouge used by the Norwich Assay Master. Both cups were produced by Cobbold’s workshop, so their absence is intriguing. It is possible that the gouges have been polished out, but no trace is apparent on either cup.

The disjuncture between the discarded chalices and the new cups’ design was obvious in ways that would have been apparent to their recipients. The simple designs that the Norwich goldsmiths frequently produced reflect speed and efficiency in the cups’ production, but also a departure from the chalice shape. In contrast to the chalice’s

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<sup>269</sup> Ticktum, *Norwich Silver*, p. 143.

<sup>270</sup> Oman describes the Reade Salt (1569) as the most important Elizabethan provincial piece and ‘the pride of the Norwich Civic Regalia’, cited by Barnett in *Norwich Silver*, p. 59.

<sup>271</sup> Fewster, ‘East Anglian Goldsmiths’, pp. 48-49.

straight, upright rim, the communion cup possessed a flared rim. A bell-shaped bowl with flared rim is a common feature of East Anglian communion cups, and the pronounced shape of the Ranworth cup is typical of William Cobbold's style. The chalice's taller and wider foot often bore figurative decoration. Oman observed that 95% of surviving pre-Reformation chalices' feet frequently bear depictions of a crucifix or the rood group, the crucified Christ flanked by the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist.<sup>272</sup> The new communion cups were primarily surrogates for the vessel used by Christ at the Last Supper, rather than receptacles for Christ's sacrificial blood shed at Calvary, whose symbolism was often evident on pre-Reformation chalices.

In contrast to the imagery of pre-Reformation chalices, the only decoration on the Ranworth cup, apart from the punched bands at the top of the stem and on the foot, is the double band of parallel lines above and beneath the bowl's inscription, and the inscription itself: '+THE● TOWNE● OF● RANWORTH 1567'. As noted previously, the letters are incised Roman capitals, and the T and H of Ranworth were compressed into one character, presumably due to lack of space. Mary Fewster observes that parish names were often added to standard inscriptions, or in the case of Barnham Broom, was never inserted.<sup>273</sup> This appears to be corroborated by the cramped inscriptions on the contemporaneous cups in the neighbouring parishes of St Mary and St Lawrence, South Walsham. These two parish churches were situated within a few yards apart in a double churchyard, an East Anglian phenomenon in which two parishes share the same plot of consecrated ground. Their respective churchwardens evidently found it prudent to include the patron saint of their church in the inscription for differentiation. Including the parish's patronage in Norwich cup inscriptions was unusual, unless the saint also formed part of a village name. Two different goldsmiths, Cobbold and Peter Peterson, used different strategies to compress the inscriptions. Peterson used two lines of small lettering, whilst Cobbold creatively combined the letters E, N and S into one character to end the inscription and merged the letters H and E together at its commencement (Plate XVI).

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<sup>272</sup> Oman, *English Church Plate*, p. 49.

<sup>273</sup> Fewster, 'East Anglian Goldsmiths', p. 279.

This new approach was in contrast to the carefully laid-out relief Gothic inscriptions found on London cups of the early sixteenth-century (Plate XVII). The seemingly universal use of Roman script by the Norwich goldsmiths, frequently incised, may have been largely expedient as they worked in haste around the time of the Archbishop's Visitation. Where lack of space meant that the parish name needed to be compressed, as in Ranworth's case, Roman letters could be easily combined rather than merely abbreviated, as they had been in Gothic script. However, the hallmarks of the Norwich Assay were already in Roman lettering before the cup replacement programme began, so this expediency may have been entirely incidental.

The use of Roman script, prominently displayed around the cup's bowl, gave the object an appearance corresponding with a period printing convention. Foreign words, and Latin in particular generally appeared in italics or Roman type. This convention emphasised their unfamiliarity but also give them a certain sophistication that stood out from the normal English Black Letter font. The significance of letter styles would have resonances in wider visual culture, including monuments and inscribed objects such as the Ranworth cup. The cup's form would already have signalled its innovative nature to its beholders. To the literate, its inscription would convey further meanings that will be explored later in this chapter.

Although the top-heavy proportions of the cup suggest that increased bowl capacity for communal use may have been a design priority, this was never specified in archiepiscopal articles and episcopal injunctions. These merely required the replacement of chalices with new cups of any dimension. Pre-Reformation chalices were primarily used by the celebrant alone and therefore bowls tended to be too small for congregational use, but poorer parishes made do with cups no larger than a small chalice.<sup>274</sup> The need to replenish communion cups during administration would only be remedied decorously in many parishes by the introduction of flagons from the 1570s onwards.<sup>275</sup> The chalice

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<sup>274</sup> Timothy Kent, "Decent Communion Cups': A National Campaign', *Treasures of the English Church: A Thousand Years of Sacred Gold and Silver* (London: Goldsmiths' Company, 2008), p. 42.

<sup>275</sup> Lane, 'Before Hooker', 320-356 (p. 339).



replacement programme was clearly more concerned with the structural dissolution of the past and erasure of its memory than convenient service in the present.

The design of the small, circular foot of the Ranworth cup may have another motive in addition to economising on silver, or using it efficiently to produce a high-volume receptacle. In Item four of his 1561 Injunctions, Bishop Parkhurst of Norwich ordered that the clergy ‘neither suffer the Lord’s Table to be hanged and decked like an altar, neither use any gestures of the popish Mass, in the time of ministration of the Communion, as shifting of the book, washing, breathing, or such like.’<sup>276</sup> The banning of the *lavabo* included the reverent ablution of the chalice that had been required by the Sarum Missal. The new communion cups’ circular foot would have made any reverent draining of the cup in the *piscina* likely to end up in a damaged condition on the hard floor. This was in contrast to the stability offered by a late Gothic hexafoil-footed chalice which enabled it to rest on its side without rolling away.

While considering the connection between chalices’ destruction and the creation of new communion cups, it is important to mention Ranworth’s paten, and its paradoxical survival. Although its size and overall shape identify the Ranworth paten as medieval, its only decoration are two narrow parallel lines made on a lathe. The middle has been beaten into a shallow bowl shape, obliterating its previous shape and engraving.<sup>277</sup> It cannot be established whether it was re-used for reasons of economy or continuity. The Vicar, John Taylor, had been instituted in the final year of Mary I’s reign, and he may have favoured its retention, albeit in a refashioned form. The bowl of the 1567 Ranworth cup was evidently sized to fit the medieval paten that had presumably been left for parochial use by the 1552 Commission. This was unusual, as new covers were usually made in the shape of depressed domes, with a circular disc-shaped foot that enable them to be used as patens.

Bishop Parkhurst’s 1569 articles of enquiry for Norwich Diocese asked if each parish possessed a ‘comely communion cup with a cover.’<sup>278</sup> It is notable that Parkhurst used

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<sup>276</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, pp. 100, 98.

<sup>277</sup> I am indebted to Mary Fewster for her opinion that the indentation of the Ranworth paten may have been beaten out to fit with the cup’s bowl (in conversation, 3 September 2015).

<sup>278</sup> Frere and Kennedy, *Visitation Articles*, p. 210.

the adjective ‘comely’ instead of Parker’s ‘decent’ to express the cups’ required quality. Unlike decency, a relatively new term, comeliness was derived from a widely used Old English word that would have been understood in the sixteenth century as a descriptor for modesty, elegance and appropriateness.<sup>279</sup> In the 1535 translation of St Paul’s First Letter to Timothy that was meant to be present in the Great Bible in every parish church from 1536 to the end of Edward VI’s reign, Miles Coverdale rendered Paul’s teaching on women’s appearance in church gatherings as

They araye them selves in comly apparell with shamfastnes [modesty] and discrete behaviour, or costly araye: but soch as it becommeth wemen that professe godlynes thorow good workes.<sup>280</sup>

This passage was cited approvingly in ‘An Homily against excess of Apparel’ in the second part of the Book of Homilies, that urged congregations to embrace an ‘honest comeliness.’<sup>281</sup> This personal comeliness would find an ecclesiastical counterpart in the new communion cups.

The cup cover had not been specified in Parker’s Visitation articles, but Parkhurst clearly intended to end the use of pre-Reformation patens. Many patens would have been made at the same time as the new cups, but others were added incrementally, such as the paten of St. Mary’s, South Walsham, which was dated five years after its cup. Ranworth continuing use of a medieval paten merits further consideration.

Most of the English pre-Reformation chalices that have survived intact have been exhumed grave goods or were preserved by recusant households or smuggled abroad with the Catholic diaspora. It appears that none remained in parochial use by the end of the Elizabethan period, testifying one of the English Reformation’s most thorough iconoclastic programmes. In contrast, a surprising number of patens in Norfolk are known to have survived. Local historian and authority on the Norwich Assay G.N.

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<sup>279</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (June 2017), <<http://www.oed.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/Entry/>>, [accessed 30 July 2018].

<sup>280</sup> 1 Timothy 2.9. *The Bible that is, the holy Scrypture of the Olde and Newe Testamente, faithfully translated in to Englishe* (Southwark: Nycolson, 1535), fol. 91<sup>r</sup>. STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) /2063.3, Cambridge University Library.

<sup>281</sup> ‘An Homily against an excess of Apparel’, *Homilies*, pp. 188, 183.

Barrett lists thirty-nine pre-Reformation patens in the possession of Norfolk churches, including the Billingford paten that was remade in 1567.<sup>282</sup> The Ranworth paten can perhaps now be added to that list. This suggests that patens were easier to conceal or considered less offensive than chalices, due to their auxiliary use at the Mass. Whereas the chalice was intrinsically involved at the moment of transubstantiation, the host was delivered on the paten by the subdeacon to the altar prior to consecration. The host did not lie on the paten on the altar but was placed by the priest on the linen corporal prior to the Eucharistic prayer. If there were other communicants, the paten would be used during administration of the sacrament, to carry consecrated wafers.<sup>283</sup> In addition to their key role at the Mass, chalices were also associated with consecrated hosts through their use as pyxes in Easter sepulchres from Maundy Thursday until Easter morning, when Christ's presence was liturgically buried, mourned and resurrected through the host.<sup>284</sup>

From a Reformed perspective, both chalice and paten would be tainted by idolatry. However, the chalice had been instrumental to the sin, whereas the paten was mainly an accessory. The latter's survival still seems remarkable, given that many bore idolatrous imagery. Most commonly the radiant face of Christ, or the vernicle, the *Manus Dei* (Divine hand raised in blessing) or the *Agnus Dei* were engraved on a central plug. All of these undergirded the significance of the consecrated host as Christ made manifest in the priest's hands. Either the Ranworth paten never possessed these images, or they were hammered into oblivion by a goldsmith. The latter hypothesis, borne out by its shape, suggests an attachment by the churchwardens to the paten as a liturgical object, but either a lack of concern for or fear of officialdom in allowing it to retain any explicit associations with the incarnational action of the Mass. Conversely, it may be that the churchwardens made a cost-based decision that was not taken by most of their counterparts across Norwich Diocese.

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<sup>282</sup> Barrett, *Norwich Silver*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>283</sup> Roger S. Wieck, *Illuminating Faith: The Eucharist in Medieval Life and Art* (New York: Morgan Library & Museum, 2014), p. 32.

<sup>284</sup> James Monti, *A Sense of the Sacred: Roman Catholic Worship in the Middle Ages* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2012), pp. 371-72, 496-97.

The imagery of the patens that continued to be used in the Elizabethan Church seems less remarkable when they are viewed within the context of other surviving images, even if partly obliterated or re-assigned to new roles. As Hamling observes, only certain types of image were removed from British churches during the early waves of iconoclasm, leaving a sizeable residual visual culture until the next wave of eradication occurred in the 1640s.<sup>285</sup>

In her study on the re-use of pre-Reformation ecclesiastical plate in religious and domestic settings, Walsham describes ‘conversion’ as the closest period term to the modern expression ‘recycling’, ‘a term that had both literal and figurative meanings and that applied to people and objects as well as to the mind, emotions, and the soul’.<sup>286</sup> The re-fashioning of Ranworth’s medieval paten would have therefore demonstrated haptically, functionally and aesthetically that old artefacts could be converted to new uses, in a parallel manner to the clergy and congregations who used them liturgically. Walsham argues that there was nothing ontologically wrong with these objects as their raw materials formed part of God’s creation. Therefore, to all but the most ardent reformers, their ‘idolatry was incidental rather than integral’.<sup>287</sup> Whilst this argument supports the evidence of re-used plate in the post-Reformation period, it does not explain why, in the case of chalices, that the Church of England’s archbishops and bishops felt that no ‘conversion’ of pre-Reformation that fell short of their dissolution and reformation as communion cups was adequate. Although it would be generally true that sixteenth-century believers would not have viewed raw materials found in God’s creation as essentially idolatrous, precious metals were an anxiety-provoking exception. Both these concerns will be considered below.

In contrast to the paten, Ranworth’s cup was an entirely newly-formed object. There has been a prevailing academic understanding of the Elizabethan cups’ manufacture that they were literally the product of physical dissolution and reformation. This is based on the notion that churchwardens would have surrendered their chalices to goldsmiths and after a fee was paid or a small amount of silver deducted, received back their reformed communion cup. It is a beguiling proposition, based on a couple of Kentish

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<sup>285</sup> Hamling, *Decorating the ‘Godly’ Household*, p. 64.

<sup>286</sup> Walsham, ‘Recycling the Sacred’, 1121-1154 (p. 1123).

<sup>287</sup> Walsham, ‘Recycling the Sacred’, 1121-1154 (p. 1128).

churchwardens' accounts of the early 1550s and Bishop Guest of Rochester's 1565 Injunction,

that the chalice of every parish church be altered into a decent communion cup therewith to minister the Holy Communion, taking away no more thereof but only so much as shall pay for the altering of the same into a cup.<sup>288</sup>

Timothy Kent, an authority on sixteenth- to eighteenth-century British silver, follows Oman in accepting Bishop Guest's aspiration as normative, and this practice of conversion was implied in churchwardens' accounts at Leverton, Lincolnshire and Braunton in Devon.<sup>289</sup>

Given the near disappearance of the goldsmiths' ecclesiastical commissions, the notion that they would undertake this major project for only modest returns perhaps reflects more of Bishop Guest's aspiration to alleviate hard-pressed churchwardens rather than realism. Whilst evidence can be found to support this practice, notably in the Norwich goldsmiths' own parish church of St Andrew, its universal application appears implausible.<sup>290</sup> One argument against this is evidence that communion cups were being sold in open markets. For example, the Norwich goldsmith Thomas Buttell transferred his business to Ely Diocese in 1568, ahead of the commencement of its chalice replacement programme, only to be fined 20 shillings by the London Goldsmiths' Company Searchers for selling inferior quality silver communion cups at Stourbridge Fair. The defective cups were seized and flattened by Company Searchers.<sup>291</sup> The second argument would be that large quantities of raw materials were already available to goldsmiths. Pamela Tudor-Craig observes that natural reserves of European silver had been largely exhausted by the thirteenth century.<sup>292</sup> Therefore the goldsmiths' craft, or 'mystery' as they termed it, was a long-established recycling industry. During the early

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<sup>288</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy p. 162.

<sup>289</sup> Kent, 'Decent Communion Cups', pp. 135-36.

<sup>290</sup> J. L'Estrange, 'The Churchwarden's Accounts of St. Andrew's Norwich,' *Norfolk Archaeology*, 7, (1872), 47-68 (p. 65).

<sup>291</sup> Ticktum, *Norwich Silver*, p. 142.

<sup>292</sup> Pamela Tudor-Craig, Foreword, in Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages* (London: Boyars, 2012) p. 14. See also C.C. Paterson, 'Silver Stocks and Losses in Ancient and Medieval Times', *Economic History Review*, 25, 2 (May 1972), 205-305 (pp. 229-30).

years of Edward VI's reign they stockpiled large amounts of silver, as churchwardens attempted to offload as much church plate as possible to avoid sequestration by Royal Commissioners in 1552. Relatively little of this seems to have returned to its original parishes or was sold on in Mary's reign and would thus have been readily available for the rapid production of communion cups.<sup>293</sup>

A third possible reason is connected to the renewed prestige of the Norwich goldsmiths. Although an alloy which supported the structure of a chalice could equally be hammered into the shape of a cup, it could contain up to 50% copper whilst retaining the appearance of silver.<sup>294</sup> Like the Ranworth paten, a large number of surviving medieval plate objects were not hall-marked, and their purity was therefore unknown. An established sixteenth-century Norwich goldsmith would not lightly risk the prestige of his mark or waste valuable workshop time on a cup that could be rejected by the Assay Master or seized and crushed at the point of sale.

Given that goldsmiths would have access to plenty of raw materials and churchwardens would presumably have wished to avoid the cost and time of making return visits, it seems more likely that the actual transaction was one of part exchange, in which the scrap value of the surrendered chalice was set against the cost of the new cup.

Nevertheless, this process still offered a powerful metaphor of plate, defiled in idolatrous worship becoming dissolved and physically reformed into a re-imagined vessel of grace. The goldsmith's concentration on the crucible during the refinement process, awaiting the moment of purification when his reflection would appear in the molten silver provided a powerful metaphor for God's purging away his people's sins, restoring their *Imagio Dei*. The image of purification as process would most readily resonate with the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, or in the Jesuit martyr St Robert Southwell's metaphysical poem 'The Burning Babe', Jesus is both goldsmith and refining process. In Southwell's poem, Christ's 'faultlesse brest' is the furnace, love is the fire and the Saviour's passion provides the fuel whereby

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<sup>293</sup> Fewster, 'East Anglian Goldsmiths', pp. 260-68.

<sup>294</sup> Fewster, 'East Anglian Goldsmiths', p. 35. Fewster remarks that this 'provides the basis for considerable fraud.'

The mettall in this Furnace wrought, are men's defiled soules:  
 For which, as now on fire I am to worke them to their good,  
 So will I melt into a bath, to wash them in my blood.<sup>295</sup>

Within the metaphorically attuned culture of Elizabethan England, the image of divine purification in passages such as Malachi 3.2-4 would have acquired a new resonance:

But who may avyde the daye of his coming. Who shal be able to endure, when he appeareth? For he is like a goldsmithes fire, and lyke wasshers sope. He shal syt him downe to trye and to clense the sylver, he shall pource the children of Levi, and purifye them lyke as golde and sylver [...] Then shall the offering of Juda and Jerusalem be acceptable unto the Lorde, lyke as from the begynnyng and in the years, aforetyme.<sup>296</sup>

In the last book of the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi foretold the coming of the Lord's messenger, who would purify the Temple and its worship. By the time of the cup replacement programme, Malachi 3 was no longer to be interpreted as a proof text for purgatory, which had been rejected by Article Twenty-Two of the Thirty-Nine Articles. The Church of England's hopes for heaven were replaced by instantaneous glorification of the true, 'elected' believer at the moment of death rather than through a gruelling posthumous process lasting centuries or millennia. For Calvinists, it foretold the ordeals prepared by God for his elect in this life to cleanse and strengthen them.<sup>297</sup> In Calvin's commentary, it was God's elect that would shine through the fires of persecution, whilst all others would be burnt away:

The Prophet says, that Christ would sit to purify the sons of Levi; for though they were the flower, as it were, and the purity of the Church, they had yet contracted

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<sup>295</sup> St Robert Southwell was born in Horsham St Faith, ten miles from Ranworth, in 1561. Robert Southwell, 'The Burning Babe', <http://shakespeareauthorship.com/xmas/soutwell.html>, [accessed 30 July 2018].

<sup>296</sup> Malachi 3.2-4, *The Bible that is, the holy Scrypture of the Olde and Newe Testamente, faythfully translated in Englysh, & newly ouersene and correcte*, (Southwark: Nycolson, 1535), STC (2<sup>nd</sup> edn) /2063.3.

<sup>297</sup> See Pierre Viret's *The Huntynge of Purgatorye to death*, trans. by John Véron, cited by Antoinina Bevan Zlatar, *Reformation Fiction: Polemical Protestant Dialogues in Elizabethan England* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), p. 82.

some contagion from the corruption which prevailed. [...] God however promises that such would be the purifying which Christ would effect, and so regulated, that it would consume the whole people, and yet purify the elect, and purify them like silver, that they may be saved.<sup>298</sup>

However, Calvinism in the Elizabethan Church of England was more often imposed from the top than experienced at ground level, and notions of purgatory may have died a very slow death. At the end of the sixteenth century, Shakespeare, described by Duffy as ‘a most unsatisfactory Protestant’, appeared to affirm the existence of purgatory on the London stage through the speech of Hamlet Senior’s ghost.<sup>299</sup> Even among less complicated Protestants, purgatory remained a widely used metaphor, even if no longer an acceptable doctrine. Whether Protestant or inwardly Catholic in outlook, the recipients of Ranworth’s cup would have been able to perceive metaphysical resonances for their redemption.

For all these reasons, this apparent correspondence between the fallen chalice that becomes a renewed cup and the Christian attaining salvation through tribulation cannot be presented as a simple narrative. It cannot be argued with certainty that churchwardens handed in their chalice and received it back as a new cup, but it is also likely that it contained silver from other parishes’ dissolved eucharistic vessels.

As an elite craft organisation, the Norwich goldsmiths were physically, socially and geographically connected to the leadership of the City Council. Many goldsmiths lived and worked around London Street, worshipping in their parish church of St. Andrew the Apostle in Bridewell Alley. Before the Edwardian Reformation, St. Andrew’s was the repository for their lavish benefactions and bequests.<sup>300</sup> At the Dissolution, the City Council took over nearby Blackfriars and renamed the Dominican friary ‘New Hall’. It became an imposing venue for corporate ceremonies, feasting and concerts, and the former chancel was leased to the Dutch Church in 1579. The Dutch Church comprised Netherlandish residents of Norwich and many refugees from persecution in the Low

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<sup>298</sup> Calvin’s commentary on Malachi, <<http://biblehub.com/commentaries/calvin/malachi/3.htm>>, [accessed 28 June 2015].

<sup>299</sup> Duffy, *Saints, Sacrilege and Sedition*, p. 253. Shakespeare, ‘Hamlet’, I. 5. 9-23, *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. by Wells and Taylor, III, pp. 1130-32.

<sup>300</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, IV, pp. 290-329.



Countries who arrived in Norwich in the 1560s. It was attended by freemen of the Goldsmiths' Company such as George Fenne, and no doubt many workshop assistants too. At a time when the London Goldsmiths closed their doors to immigrant goldsmiths, the Norwich Company capitalised on their expertise by allowing them to work and purchase their freedom, providing them with a special form of oath.

The City Council also purchased an open space near St Andrew's church as a preaching ground to promote an evangelical agenda. The interior of St Andrew's was remodelled to accommodate civic services. This cluster, formed of the New Hall with its integral Dutch Church, preaching ground and St Andrew's, formed a potent spiritual triangle within the city's civic heart.

Although the pre-Reformation goldsmith's guild had adorned their church, it would become a nexus for puritanism in the city. Two inscriptions above the inner south and north porch doors respectively proclaimed Edwardian reform and its Elizabethan re-establishment:

This church was [...] lately translated from extreme Idolatry, A thousand and five hundred and seven and fortie. And in the first year of our noble King Edward, The Gospell in Parliament was mightily set forward.

As the Good King *Josiah* being of tender age Purged the Realm from all Idolatry, Even so our noble Queen & Counsell sage, set up the Gospell and banish Popery. At twenty fower Years began she her Reigne, And forty four did it maintain.<sup>301</sup>

It is interesting to note the epithet of the reforming Old Testament boy-king Josiah that was frequently applied to Edward VI being revived for his half-sister.<sup>302</sup>

On 2 November 1559 patronage of the parish church of St Andrew was conveyed to congregational trustees and thereafter Norwich goldsmiths appointed a succession of

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<sup>301</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, III, pp. 290-329.

<sup>302</sup> See Margaret Aston, *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995), pp. 26-36, 49-53.

leading Calvinist divines as their Ministers.<sup>303</sup> George Gardiner was appointed Minister of St. Andrew's between 1562 and 1571, the period covering the commencement of the Norwich assay and peak communion cup manufacture. Cobbold served as churchwarden of St. Andrew's during this period and was also commissioned to make the parish communion cup. This may have been in acknowledgement of his professional skills and organizational ability. Gardiner, who later became Dean of Norwich, was a friend of the reformist minded royal favourite, the Earl of Leicester. Gardiner also enjoyed the patronage of Bishops Parkhurst and Grindal, and was successively minor canon and Prebend of Norwich Cathedral during his incumbency of St Andrew's. According to articles laid against him in Parker's Visitation, Gardiner was characterised as 'a man very troublesome, and dissenting,' who took part in breaking down the cathedral organ.<sup>304</sup>

Gardiner's successor was John More, known as 'the Apostle of Norwich' for the many conversions attributed to him. More's appointment to St Andrew's occurred towards the end of the Norwich cup replacement programme, but may indicate that the goldsmiths, who had been agents of material reform within Norwich Diocese, desired to be on the receiving end of godly preaching. Through More's preaching and writings, worship could be properly accompanied by a full ministry of the word, in Norwich at least. More preached three or four times every Sunday in a diocese where an overwhelming majority of clergy had no such licence.

More was a controversial preacher who refused to wear a surplice and depended on Bishop Parkhurst's protection. He was later suspended by Bishop Freke between 1576 and 1578 for presenting a petition to the City Council denouncing religious ceremonies. In the preface to his Catechism of 1572, he lamented the partially-reformed state of the Church of England as being worse than that of the pre-Reformation Church, largely due to the clergy's inability to preach or teach the gospel. Whereas the medieval priesthood had laboured under a 'darke and barbarous religion [...] so thicke a cloud spread over

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<sup>303</sup> *A Cambridge Alumni Database*, (Cambridge University), <<http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/search>>, [accessed 25 August 2016]. John More was Minister of St. Andrew's Norwich from 1573 to 1591, suspended between 1576 and 1578 for objections to imposition of ceremonies.

<sup>304</sup> J.M. Blatchley, 'More, John', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/view/article/>>, [accessed 29 August 2015].

their maners, that the fullness of their synnes was not easely sene,' there was no excuse for the Reformation's children of light:

There hath not bene among us any popish Priest so drunken, nor any alehouse Chaplen at such perpetuall truce with hys drinking pots, that hath so possibly purchased so much discredite to his belly God, and kitchin faith, as our dum Dogs and guides, so dayly multiply against the God of Israel [...] It [...] lotheth me much more to rehearse the estate of the ministration into which we are fallen.<sup>305</sup>

Only three of More's sermons preached at St Andrew's Norwich have survived, none of which refer directly to the goldsmiths' craft. However, the new lectionary would have opened up a treasury of Biblical references to flagellate the goldsmiths' consciences. Either they, their parents or former masters would have been engaged in creating the kind of imagery that was now condemned in the weekly recitation of the Ten Commandments during the morning service. The Book of Common Prayer's Ten Commandments followed Leo Jud's re-numbering that prominently set out the making and worship of graven images discretely as the second commandment, rather than merge it into prohibition against polytheism, as the Vulgate and Lutheran Bibles did.<sup>306</sup> This numbering was also adopted by Calvin in his *Institutes*.

In addition to this Divine injunction, the Psalter was peppered with references to the impotence of idols and the futility of their production. For example, Psalm 135.15-18, said or sung at Matins on the 28th day of each month, contrasts the invisible living God with 'the images of the heathen, [...] but silver and gold: the work of men's hands.' Mute, inert and unseeing, these idols share the existence and destiny of their deluded producers and followers: 'they that make them are like unto them: and so are all they that put their trust in them.'<sup>307</sup> The Injunctions that required the obliteration of their former

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<sup>305</sup> John More, *A briefe and necessary Instruction, verye needefull to bee knowen of all housholders, Whereby they maye the better teach and instruct their families in such points of Christian Religion as is most meete. Not onely of them thoroughly to be understood, but also requisite to be learned by hart of all suche as shall bee admitted unto the Lordes Supper* (1572), fol. 5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>306</sup> Communion (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 125. This pattern had been in English use since the 1530s.

<sup>307</sup> Psalm 135.15, 18 (1662), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 599.

artistry were reinforced by regular congregational psalm singing and from the pulpit following the publication in 1571 of an official ‘Homily against the Peril of Idolatry’.<sup>308</sup>

For the goldsmiths, these words would have underlined a twofold sense of futility. However great their expertise and reputation, and Cobbold is regarded as the most significant provincial goldsmith of his generation, their products were ultimately destined for the crucible as fashions changed or their bullion content was needed. Secondly and more importantly for their spiritual welfare, the freemen of the reformed Norwich Company would be confronted by a new conviction that the skills they had employed in creating devotional and liturgical artefacts had resulted only in the delusion and possible damnation of their forebears and those they served.

More also preached at daily ‘exercises’ attended by a devout circle nicknamed ‘St Andrew’s birds,’ regarded with suspicion as Brownists, puritans or disobedient persons.<sup>309</sup> ‘Brownists’ was a nickname given to the followers of Robert Browne, who attempted to set up England’s first congregational church in Norwich in 1581. It is not known whether Norwich’s goldsmiths were among the ‘birds’ flocking to More’s ‘exercises’ or were attending to their workshops instead.

Although More took offence at the ‘dumb’ ministry of many clergy, his Catechism offers an insight into puritan sacramental thought. Whatever the glaring shortcomings of the Elizabethan Church, its sacramental ministry offered the true believer spiritual communion with Christ, somatically sealing their salvation:

The Supper of the Lorde doth strengthen my faith [...] as surely as I receive the bread and wine into my body, to become of perfect substance with my flesh, so Christ hath given himselfe wholly to become mine, & nourisheth my soule to everlasting lyfe, his death and passion is my deliverance from syn, his righteousness is my justification, even so surely confirmed unto me, as if I myself

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<sup>308</sup> ‘An Homily against Peril of Idolatry, and Superfluous Decking of Churches’, *Homilies*, pp. 102-60.

<sup>309</sup> Patrick Collinson, *English Puritanism* (London: Historical Association, 1987), p. 7.

had perfourmed in myne own body that most holy obedience unto his father,  
which he alone fulfilled.<sup>310</sup>

Notwithstanding their idolatrous past, Norwich goldsmiths fashioned communion cups as graceful, grace-filled vessels, offering assurance to God's elect. However, a dangerous ambiguity remained, due to their potentially idolatrous substance. Silver was a precious but also dangerous material. Even if not fashioned into an idol, silver was an idolatrous substance. It could be loved or worshipped as Mammon. In the first part of the 'Homily against Peril of Idolatry', silver is classified along with gold as something that could be worshipped as both a sacred object but also as a substance: 'not onely the images, but the matter of them [...] as that vice is of all others in the Scriptures peculiarly called idolatry'.<sup>311</sup> Although this homily did not single out Eucharistic plate, the implications would have been obvious to an attentive congregation.

Viewed from the perspective of its production, the Ranworth communion cup belongs to a genre that was fashioned at the heart of Norwich's civic Protestantism. They were made by goldsmiths who were either Calvinists or subject to their influence and may have also reflected the reformist aspirations of Norwich's elite. The cups they manufactured embodied an aesthetic of Calvinist decency, and were to be deployed in a liturgy that was not intrinsically Calvinist but could be harmonized with Calvin's eucharistic teaching. Although Elizabethan puritanism has been marginalized by traditional scholarship as a radical, dissenting movement, this 'reading' of Norwich cups locates puritanism closer to the middle of the diocese, matching the early modern historian Patrick Collinson's assessment of puritanism's 'conservative achievement.' Collinson observes that by harnessing 'potentially turbulent religious energies of popular, vernacular Protestantism' and directing them 'along the relatively docile channels of the conditioned and controlled religious experience which was Calvinism', the Norwich goldsmiths produced communion cups that would both mediate and moderate the eucharistic experience of their users.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> More, *A brieve and necessary Instruction*, fols 22<sup>r</sup>-23<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>311</sup> 'First Part of the Sermon against the perils of Idolatry', *Homilies*, p. 103.

<sup>312</sup> Collinson, *English Puritanism*, p. 31.

However, this does not imply that such intentions would be realised among the cups' recipients. Officially imposed positions simply added to the range of perspectives available to Elizabethans, alongside previous traditions and an early scientific world view. Just as goldsmiths possessed an intimate craft knowledge of the metals they fashioned into cups, so their recipients would to varying degrees understand a connection between these materials, the created universe and their own bodies.

#### The material and alchemical cup.

The third perspective on the cup comes from period understanding of its materials and their place in the cosmos. Tudor life was dominated by the planetary system. Centuries before the discovery of particle physics they possessed a different understanding of the universe's interconnection. The 'seven ages of man' speech in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* observes life as a progression through the influence of the seven planets visible to the naked eye, and their unravelling in old age. Planets could strike, as Shakespeare tells his audience in *Hamlet*.<sup>313</sup> They could cause epidemics through their *influenza*. Luna, the moon, could induce lunacy.<sup>314</sup>

Elizabethans also perceived correspondence between planets and metals. The hierarchies of metals and the planets were also connected, gold with the sun, silver with the moon. Silver and the moon represented purity, but there was a dark side to the moon and silver could tarnish.

Sixteenth-century people believed that there was silver in the firmament and also in its somatic connection with the humans who used it. Modern science has confirmed ancient beliefs that our bodies contain silver and other metals, but in much smaller traces than our sixteenth-century ancestors may have imagined. However, their metal-based metaphors of character still abound. 'Silver tongued' still suggests smoothness, flattery and deception. The 'Homily of the worthy receiving and reverend esteeming of the

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<sup>313</sup> Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II. 7. 139-66, *Hamlet*, I. 1. 143, *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. by Wells and Taylor, II, p. 701, III, p. 1124. Bucklow, *Alchemy of Paint*, pp. 121-22.

<sup>314</sup> Bucklow, *Alchemy of Paint*, p. 124.

sacrament of the body and blood of Christ' stressed the importance of purity of life and intentions for each communicant, quoting the eucharistic teaching of 1 Corinthians 11.29, 'he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation [...] Let a man prove himself, and to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.' Like the silver used in the manufacture of the cup, its recipient also needed to be proved worthy 'to come reverently and decently to the Table of the Lord,' through 'knowledge out of his Word, [...] a true and constant Faith, [...] as well as is praising God and loving our Neighbor, as purging our own Conscience from filthines'.<sup>315</sup>

Although silver was second only to gold in traditional hierarchies of metals, it was associated with the moon, which caused lunacy and deception on earth. Silver was a currency for deception and treachery in the Bible. In the Old Testament, Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery for twenty pieces of silver. Later in the story, he tests their repentance by planting their silver coins and his silver goblet in their travel bags.<sup>316</sup> In the Gospels, Judas betrays Jesus to the High Priest for thirty pieces of silver. A remorseful Judas returns the reward, but it becomes tainted by his death and cannot be returned to the Temple treasury.<sup>317</sup>

The production of silver communion cups is perhaps surprising, given its associations with an idolatrous classical past, ambiguous Biblical status and extensive use in idolatrous worship of the pre-Reformation Church. The chalice and paten and their consecrated wine and wafer were an idol within an idol. Silver was also a preferred material for pyxes. Pyxes were denounced in the 'Second Part of the Homily against Idolatry', as were those who 'shrine them even over the Lords table, even as it were the purpose to the worshipping and honouring of them'.<sup>318</sup> Contradicting the continuing use of silver in eucharistic plate, the second Homily speaks approvingly of lesser materials used in the Patristic age:

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<sup>315</sup> 'An Homily of the Worthy Receiving and Reverend Esteeming of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ', *Homilies*, pp. 270, 276.

<sup>316</sup> Genesis 38.7, 44.1-2.

<sup>317</sup> Matthew 26.14-6, 27.3-7.

<sup>318</sup> 'Homily against Idolatry', *Homilies*, p. 111.

Saint Jerome commendeth Exuperius Bishop of Tolose, that he carried the Sacrament of the Lords body in a wicker basket, and the Sacrament of his bloud in a glass, and so cast covetousness out of the Church.’<sup>319</sup>

Furthermore, the early modern historian Keith Thomas observes that ‘there were numerous popular superstitions about the magical value of communion silver as a cure for illness or a lucky charm against danger.’<sup>320</sup>

However, silver’s continuing use may be partly due to its availability and partly its appropriateness as a high-status material to an exalted liturgical purpose. The Protestant eucharist celebrated in each Church of England parish may no longer have been a dramatic liturgical re-enactment of Christ’s sacrifice, but as a symbolic spiritual feast of the highest status it required the best available craftsmanship and quality of materials. Thus, the future use of silver in English communion plate remained secure. Silver’s impurities were known but could be removed by refinement. The smelting of chalices and their re-fabrication as communion cups provided a tangible symbol of spiritual reformation.

Within sixteenth-century alchemic or ‘craft’ understanding, there would also have been an important affinity between silver communion cups and the wine they contained. Sulphur-mercury theory, which had originated in the writings of the eighth-century alchemist Jabir ibn Hayyan and introduced to the Christian West in the twelfth-century, remained popular and was considered compatible with Reformed Christianity.<sup>321</sup> Jabir synthesised material elements such as gold and silver with the hylomorphic theories of ancient Greece, which state that everything that exists is a combination of the dual, indivisible principles of form and matter. Jabir’s sulphur-mercury theory linked the masculine principle, form, with heaven, fire, the colour red, action and sulphur. He regarded matter as inherently female, representing the earth, water, mercury, white and potentiality. The art historian and chemist Spike Bucklow likens sulphur-mercury theory to the inseparable Taoist principles of *yin* and *yang*, which contain appear outwardly

<sup>319</sup> ‘Homily against Idolatry’, *Homilies*, p. 111.

<sup>320</sup> Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century England* (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 36.

<sup>321</sup> Bucklow, *Alchemy of Paint*, pp. 82, 93. J. Andrew Mendelsohn, ‘Alchemy and Politics in England, 1649-1665’, *Past & Present*, 135 (May 1992), 30-78.



different whilst containing elements of one another.<sup>322</sup> Bound together by salt, sulphur and mercury formed a material trinity that remained intellectually plausible into the early modern period. The historian of science J. Andrew Mendelsohn notes that some English puritans felt no disharmony between alchemy and their Calvinist beliefs.<sup>323</sup>

Sulphur-Mercury theory was represented in mythological terms as the incestuous love of the red youth and white maiden, who were transformed by a heavenly marriage into the red king and white queen.<sup>324</sup> The absorption of theory into western medieval thought was visually manifested in late medieval representations of spiritual and temporal power, influencing religious art and allegorical court ceremonies and pageants, especially in Tudor England. In late medieval religious imagery, there was an emerging interplay between the Virgin Mary, arrayed in a voluminous white veil, swooning into the arms of the red-cloaked, youthful figure of St John the Evangelist in the presence of Jesus. Two well-known examples can be seen in the *Isenheim Altarpiece* and Rogier Van Der Weyden's *Altarpiece of the Seven Sacraments* (plate XVIII). There is a further alchemical reading of these figures possible beyond the immediate emotional drama of Christ's dead body. St. John was patron saint of alchemists and in the prologue to his gospel Christ is introduced as the *logos* or Word, the creative principle of God's act of creation. In late medieval affective spirituality, the Virgin and St John represent the ideal of the grieving Christian's response. They also embody the embrace of the alchemical red youth and white queen in their worship of the Creator.

Within the temporal realm, this contrapuntal balance was also evident in symbolism used by the Tudors. The Lancastrian red petals enveloped the white rose of York, becoming Henry VII's emblem, the Tudor Rose, after his marriage to Elizabeth of York.<sup>325</sup> The day before his coronation, Henry VIII went in procession to meet his recent bride dressed in a

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<sup>322</sup> Bucklow, *Alchemy of Paint*, pp. 77-86. Bucklow uses capitals to differentiate the philosophical principles Sulphur and Mercury from the chemical elements of the same name.

<sup>323</sup> Mendelsohn, 'Alchemy and Politics in England', pp. 49-51.

<sup>324</sup> Bucklow, *Alchemy of Paint*, p. 107.

<sup>325</sup> See John N. King, *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1989), ch. 1. King demonstrates the Tudor dynasty's use of religious symbolism, including the rose, in response to changing political situations.

crimson cloak like the red youth, whilst Catherine of Aragon was arrayed like the white maiden, wearing a white dress and adorned with pearls.<sup>326</sup>

The relevance of these alchemical principles would have implications for eucharistic reception and the return of lay consumption from cups. Sulphur-mercury theory was associated with eucharistic theology in what medieval historian Caroline Walker Bynum describes as ‘the habit of concomitant thinking’.<sup>327</sup> The doctrine of concomitance, that Christ’s blood was part of his flesh and could therefore be ingested through wafers alone, was promoted by thirteenth-century clergy who were concerned that laity might spill the chalice and was finally promulgated by the Council of Constance in 1415.<sup>328</sup>

Concomitance theory was therefore holistic and transcendental in that Christ could be fully transubstantiated into the host alone. Bynum argues that its wider application was important for medieval understanding of matter in general. In Catholic doctrine, Christ was entirely present corporeally in the smallest fragment of consecrated host and simultaneously present at every earthly altar at mass, tabernacled in a pyx or displayed in a monstrance during the service of benediction whilst remaining at the Father’s right hand in heaven. Miraculous ‘bleeding’ hosts, that would later be ridiculed by reformers, were upheld as corroborating evidence for concomitance.<sup>329</sup> Visually, the manifestation of red liquid from within a white solid was indicative of its sacramental completeness.

Concomitance was rejected by the English reformers. Having moved through Lutheranism towards a more Zwinglian attitude to the sacraments, Cranmer introduced the reconfigured evangelical sacrament of the Eucharist to English worshippers in the 1548 Order of Communion.<sup>330</sup> In this immediate precursor to the first Book of Common prayer, the congregation were to receive the sacrament in both kinds, whilst the text

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<sup>326</sup> Thomas Penn, *Winter King: The Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Penguin, 2012), p. 359.

<sup>327</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone, 2011), p. 213.

<sup>328</sup> Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, p. 209.

<sup>329</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2007), p. 50. Wieck, *Illuminating Faith*, p. 78. The micro-organism *micrococcus prodigiosus* was identified in the nineteenth century as the cause for red drops appearing on bread that subsequently liquefy.

<sup>330</sup> MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life*, pp. 384-86.

stressed the wholeness in its separate parts that equalled that of the concomitant pre-Reformation host. This was a liturgical consequence of the Sacrament Act of 1547, which ordered administration of the sacrament in both bread and wine throughout the Church of England, to be ‘more conformable to the common use and practise bothe of Thapostles and of the primative Churche by the space of Five hundred yeares and more after Christs assention’.<sup>331</sup> The legal restoration of this practice was intended to be normative but not dogmatic. The Act’s final sentence stated that it was ‘not condempninge hereby the usage of anny Churche owt of the Kings Majesties Dominions,’ indicating that it would not be a hindrance to good relationships with Reformed churches elsewhere.

The cup’s prehistory began with the cup shared at the Last Supper but more immediately with Cranmer’s liturgical changes of the late 1540s. Cranmer’s 1548 *Order of the Communion*, a Reformed vernacular interjection into the Sarum Mass, revived the practice of administering both wafer and cup to the laity for the first time since the early thirteenth century, without elevation. The chalice was also elevated at the mass but rarely appears in medieval images, due to its entirely clerical associations. From the twelfth century onwards, the priest alone consumed the wine, so chalices became too small for congregational use and were tainted by the stain of transubstantiation. The markedly different proportions between chalices’ and communion cups’ feet, stems and bowls has been noted previously, with the later appearing top-heavy and the former bottom-heavy. This characteristic of the chalice had been well suited to reverent elevation, as the celebrant could hold it by the foot in one hand and by the knot on the tall stem in the other, leaving an unencumbered view of the bowl to the watching congregation. In common with most reformers, Cranmer had a strong antipathy to the *elevatio* and had banned it from 1548 onwards. The Ranworth cup’s short stem physically underlined Cranmer’s prohibition, making it impossible for the priest to elevate it without touching and partly obscuring the bowl.

The first lesson for the clergy was to drink normally rather than drain the chalice:

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<sup>331</sup> Sacrament Act 1547, 1547 c.1 (Regnal. 1\_Edw\_6) section 8, <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Edw6/1/1/section/VIII>>, [accessed 17 June 2017].

He shal blesse and consecrate the biggest Chalice or soome faire and convenient Cup or Cuppes full of wyne [...] and that daie, not to drink it up al himselfe, but taking one onely suppe or draught.<sup>332</sup>

From then until 1553 and onwards from 1559, English churchgoers moved towards Reformed practice, one sup at a time. Cranmer's practical rubric shows an indifference to the consecration of chalices or even to the principle of a common cup, but his arrest, and the suppression of the evangelical movement in England in 1553 makes his attitude to chalice replacement a matter of conjecture. However, his openness to Zwinglian and Calvinist reform suggests a similar outlook. Calvin and Zwingli offered widely differing approaches to the eucharist. For the former it was a highly spiritualised occasion under ministerial presidency, while the latter emphasised a purely memorialised meal within a laicised and domesticated setting. Walsham observes that both Swiss reformers heralded a 'revolution in ritual theory' that would lead to the re-interpretation of sacramental worship in England.<sup>333</sup> By the time of the 1552 Prayer Book, any reference to size disappeared from the Communion rubrics, as had use of the word 'chalice.' The wine in the cup could be replenished as necessary without further consecration. In order to underline its continuing mundane nature, the rubric allowed the minister to take any leftovers away 'to hys owne use.'<sup>334</sup>

It was one challenge to prevent the clergy from draining the cup, and another to induce the laity to receive it. The practice of administration in both kinds had largely disappeared from Western Christendom by the beginning of the thirteenth century. Cranmer's new Prayer of Humble Access expressed the eucharistic elements as a gracious remedy for the communicants' unworthiness, as nourishment and purifying medicine for the whole person, both body and soul. It concluded with these words:

Graunt us therefore, gracious lorde, so to eat the fleshe of thy dere sonne Jesus Christ, and to drynke his bloude in these holy Misteries, that we may continuallye

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<sup>332</sup> Order of the Communion (1548), *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, ed. by R.C.D. Jasper, and G.J. Cuming (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical, 1990), p. 231.

<sup>333</sup> Walsham, 'History, Memory, and the English Reformation', 898-938 (p. 909).

<sup>334</sup> Communion (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 140.

dwell in hym, and he in us, that oure synfull bodyes may bee made cleane by his body, and our soules washed through hys most precious bloud. Amen.<sup>335</sup>

The somatic correspondence between Christ's body and blood with the believer's body and soul respectively had its roots in late medieval theological treatises and also in Sulphur-Mercury theory. Bynum notes that scholastic theologians equated blood with spirit in an allegorical manner. Blood was perceived as carrying the individual's life and soul, present throughout the body and indivisible from it as the *veritas humanae naturae*, or their complete personhood.<sup>336</sup> Despite the Reformation era ruptures that divided Catholic and Protestant eucharistic theologies, physiological theories were still held in common and informed Protestant theology through symbol and allegory. Cranmer altered his Prayer of Humble Access in 1549 by removing the clause 'in these holy Misteries' to erase any lingering sense of Christ's physical presence in bread and wine, rather than in the totality of the true believer's experience of the Lord's Supper. However, the remainder of the prayer was unchanged, reminding the Elizabethan communicant that Christ's self-offering was symbolically represented in these elements.

Moreover, there was an increased emphasis on their physical appearance. In the 1552 Prayer Book's eucharistic rubrics, ordinary bread was required in place of wafers, but with the stipulation that it should be 'the beste and purest wheate breade, that conveniently may be gotten.'<sup>337</sup> This would have been white bread, which would have complemented the colour of the communion wine in terms of sulphur-mercury theory's iconography. This also pointed to the completeness of a coloured liquid held within a silver receptacle. In its present condition, the Ranworth cup's white silver surface contrasts with the redness of communion wine, but this is unlikely to have been the case during the early years of its use.

London churchwardens' accounts of the period suggest that Malmsey was the most used variety of communion wine. Malmsey was a sweet Madeira white wine, to which black

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<sup>335</sup> Communion (1549), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, pp. 33-34. Jasper and Cuming describe Cranmer's prayer as 'a pastiche of phrases found in [...] Scripture, the early liturgies, German Church Orders and theological treatises', *Prayers of the Eucharist*, ed. by Jasper and Cuming, p. 227.

<sup>336</sup> Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 162.

<sup>337</sup> Communion (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 140.

grapes had sometimes been added. This gave the wine a tawny colour through natural oxidation and being darkened by the heat of ships' holds.<sup>338</sup> Therefore it may have appeared as a brownish liquid within a gold bowl. Nevertheless, Bucklow argues that the material understanding available to period communicants would enable them to perceive the substance beneath its appearance. Even if the inside of the Ranworth cup's bowl was originally gilded, its users would have been aware that it was substantially composed of 'white' silver, representing mercury and the earth, ready to receive the heavenly element of sulphur in liquid form.<sup>339</sup> For reasons of cost it would have been inconceivable to its original recipients that Ranworth's cup would be solid gold rather than gilded silver.

However, it is much harder to determine how many of Ranworth's mainly illiterate congregation would be conversant with sulphur-mercury theory. The prevalence in the English language for common metaphors based on early scientific knowledge has already been observed, suggesting at least a vague general awareness. Also, there would have been educated members of the congregation from the greater households and as the social historian Peter Bearman has noted, Norfolk had a much higher proportion of resident gentry than other parts of the country.<sup>340</sup> Fewster notes that a surprisingly high number of names of sons of Norfolk gentry appear in the Apprentice Book of the London Goldsmiths' Company between 1578 and 1645, although many did not subsequently work as goldsmiths.<sup>341</sup> Clearly it was felt in local gentry circles that learning the goldsmiths' craft 'mysteries' constituted a worthwhile education. As plate was a major constituent of a sixteenth-century household's displayed wealth, these apprenticeships may have embedded within Norfolk gentry families a craft understanding of items that they commissioned or purchased.

Sulphur-Mercury theory offered an explanation for the different properties of metals, but also had correspondence with period theoretical concepts of brain structure. Just as the

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<sup>338</sup> I am indebted to Revd. Neil Fairlamb, Rector of Beaumaris for his knowledge of the period English wine trade.

<sup>339</sup> Spike Bucklow, in conversation, 27 July 2015.

<sup>340</sup> Peter S. Bearman, *Relations into Rhetorics: Local Elite Social Structure in Norfolk, England, 1540-1640* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 1993), p. 50.

<sup>341</sup> Fewster, 'East Anglian Goldsmiths', p. 167. London, Goldsmiths' Company Library. LGC A.B. 1, fol. 351, Apprentice Book 1578-1645. Fewster notes that twenty-eight out of ninety-three apprentices from Norfolk came from gentry families.

material world was formed of a trinity of salt, sulphur and mercury, the brain was also considered to be tripartite in the Scholastic tradition. The brain was conceived as three chambers. At the front, the hot, dry sensory *cellula phantastica*, passed visual images to the linguistic centre, the warm, moist middle chamber, the *cellula rationalis*. The middle chamber ordered and processed the images into knowledge, feeding the *cellula memorialis*, the reservoir of memory at the back of the mind, from which the *rationalis* could draw on archived material for fresh thought.<sup>342</sup> This mechanical model offers insight into how the new artefacts of Reformation era Ranworth were believed to be apprehended through the senses, to be understood and then remembered, displacing older memories of worship or bringing them forward to be transformed in the newly-enlightened rationality of parishioners' minds.

The social and liturgical cup: the interplay of secular feasting and liturgical practices.

The fourth perspective from which the Ranworth cup can be viewed is from the imaginative interplay between period experience of ceremonial drinking in social settings and a reformed liturgy that transformed the eucharist from Mass to Lord's Supper. Both feasting and worship involved convention, display, ritual and symbolism. In order for the new cups to be accepted and used by the laity, the language and visual drama of worship could draw on people's experience outside church. As there was no conscious separation between secular and sacred parts of sixteenth-century peoples' lives, this part of the chapter will move between feast and liturgy as interconnected cognitive strands.

Although I would wish to argue that the Ranworth cup, in common with the Norwich communion cups of the 1560s, was designed for purpose and belong to a new ecclesiastical aesthetic, it also possessed oblique but suggestive resonances with domestic objects. However, 'secular' is a fraught term to apply to this period. Also, the routine destruction of domestic plate as fashions changed means that comparisons between communion cups and surviving secular examples may not provide a complete

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<sup>342</sup> Alexander Roob, *The Hermetic Museum: Alchemy & Mysticism* (Cologne: Taschen, 2014), p. 458.

picture. It is also important to recognize that they would be deployed in a setting that would have been more socially embedded than traditional liturgies appear today.

The ‘decent’ communion cup has similarly been viewed by many scholars as a domestic design transposed into an ecclesiastical setting. Jackson likened the outline of the Edwardian cup at St. Margaret Pattens, London, to ‘a modern celery glass.’<sup>343</sup> Fewster states that ‘chalices were replaced by ‘communion cups’ which were frequently indistinguishable from the ordinary drinking cups of the day.’ She qualifies this with an observation that ‘from the late sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century it is sometimes impossible to decide whether a communion cup was purchased or donated specifically for church use, or whether it was a secular cup donated at a later date.’<sup>344</sup> This qualification potentially excludes Norwich cups made during the 1560s, which have no direct surviving secular counterparts. The cups’ closest resemblances, notwithstanding regional variations, were to one another.<sup>345</sup> Unlike secular cups of obsolete design that were donated to churches, these were bespoke items that expressed an attentiveness to liturgy and doctrine.

That is not to say that the Ranworth cup has no resonances with secular plate, or that the original congregation would have been oblivious to them. Functionally, it had affinities with wine cups used in secular feasting and was generally similar in height, but little similarity in terms of bowl and stem shape. The 1568 communion cup made for St Andrew’s Norwich by William Cobbold appears to incorporate a flat-bottomed, bucket shaped bowl of a type of wine or beer goblet produced in London plate and Venetian glass in the 1520s to 1530s.<sup>346</sup> However, only one other similar example exists, at Wood Dalling in Norfolk. One of the closest secular counterparts that I have observed to the East Anglian cup cover belongs not actually to a cup, but a London hourglass salt of 1507-8 in the possession of Christ’s College, Cambridge.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Jackson, *Illustrated History of English Plate*, p. 170.

<sup>344</sup> Fewster, ‘East Anglian Goldsmiths’, pp. 252-53 fn. 56.

<sup>345</sup> Kent, ‘Decent Communion Cups’, p. 42.

<sup>346</sup> *East Anglian Silver*, ed. by Christopher Hartsop, (Cambridge: Adamson, 2004), pp. 40-1.

<sup>347</sup> ‘Christ’s College: Plate’, *Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire*, III, (1959), <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/cambs/vol3/pp429-436#h3-0016>>, [accessed 4 January 2016].



However, the communion cups' physical location within the liturgy offered domestic resonances as much as their shape and function. Their prominence on the Holy Table, at eye level for kneeling communicants, suggest parallels with standing cups. These were primarily display objects, placed on sideboards during feasts, sometimes referred to as steeple cups for their tall, ostentatious covers. The paten covers, ordered by Bishop Parkhurst in his 1569 Injunctions, topped by a small disc which doubled as a foot, resembled a steeple cup with a flattened cover.<sup>348</sup> In its visual aspects as centrepiece to the Lord's Supper, the Ranworth cup would have provided a visual symbol of invisible divine patronage, with obvious references to the standing cups and covers of secular feasting.

The medieval art curator Stephen Fleigel notes how such luxurious cups, often referred to in the inventories of greater Elizabethan houses, were displayed and deployed in ceremonial drinking rituals that perpetuated late medieval customs of benevolent hospitality.<sup>349</sup> Indeed, the art historian Andrew Morrall observes that 'drinking itself played a part in every public and private ceremony, every commercial bargain, every occasion for mourning or rejoicing.'<sup>350</sup> The role of cups in mourning and celebration would combine poignantly in the liturgy of the Lord's Supper, as both memorial of Christ's self-offering and the believer's seal of salvation. In the absence of precedent for over three centuries in Western Christendom, the new cups combined with liturgy and setting in a kind of ecclesiastical trinity to provide structure and fresh understanding for lay reception of the chalice. Whereas the pre-Reformation Mass had emphasised the miraculous re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice at an altar, Cranmer's Prayer of Humble Access emphasised the drawing together of a community around a table at which Christ was the unseen host of the supper, aided by his livered stewards, the clergy, to share fellowship with one another and express true communion with him in its reformed sense. In a pre-Reformation attempt to convey the cup's significance to Christ's disciples at the Last Supper, Erasmus resorted to secular fellowship as his example, written in 1517 but

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<sup>348</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 210.

<sup>349</sup> Stephen N. Fleigel, 'An Elizabethan Silver Cup with Cover', *Cleveland Studies in the History of Art*, VIII, (2003), 34-43 (p. 37).

<sup>350</sup> Andrew Morrall, 'Protestant Pots: Morality and Social Ritual in the Early Modern Home', *Journal of Design History*, XV, 4, (2002), 263-273 (p. 266).

accessible locally through the pages of Ranworth's copy of his New Testament *Paraphrases* in 1548:

Jesus did institute and consecrate this secrete signe and memoriall in two thynges, by the whiche, amittie among men is wont to be intertayned: that the charitie by the which Christ gave himself to his, should couple us together also: who oftentimes eate together of one breade, and drinke of one cuppe.<sup>351</sup>

This expression of communal amity would have resonated powerfully with a sixteenth-century audience, who in Bynum's view, instinctively connected the Eucharist with table fellowship:

Eating [in late medieval Europe] was [...] an occasion for union with one's fellows and one's God, a commensality given particular intensity by the prototypical meal, the Eucharist, which seemed to hover in the background of any banquet.<sup>352</sup>

Both the Sarum Mass and Prayer Book Lord's Supper had affinities to secular dining practices, but as meals of a very different order. The Church of England's reformed liturgy would reverse the priority of this relationship, moving the banquet into the foreground of the eucharist.

The Lord's Supper recalled Jesus' hosting of the Last Supper and unique self-offering on the cross that made reciprocity problematic due to human sinfulness, but not impossible. In Cranmer's Prayer of Humble Access, the priest said on behalf of the congregation 'we be not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table, but thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy'.<sup>353</sup> In considering Shakespeare's use of stage meals, the literary and material culture historian Catherine Richardson speaks of the interplay of hospitality and reciprocity they entailed. In the case of this divinely-ordained feast, this interplay was profoundly asymmetric. The vicar and

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<sup>351</sup> Ranworth copy, Matthew fol. 100<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>352</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987), p. 3.

<sup>353</sup> Communion (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 136.

communicants of Ranworth came simultaneously as honoured guests and menial servants to a meal which all present consumed and spectators were not admitted.<sup>354</sup>

This symbolic and spiritualised meal celebrated individual discipleship and incorporation into the body of Christ. It lacked the elaborate display of the Mass it replaced, which paralleled high-status feasting in its use of plate and elaborate vestments. In an exceptional meal, the most important plate would be used and Fewster notes from the evidence of churchwarden's accounts 'the fashion of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth-centuries for having a grand chalice.'<sup>355</sup> Belonging to a late medieval 'culture of magnificence' that filtered down from royal courts via the gentry, these elaborate chalices contained display features but were seen only briefly, and therefore to greater dramatic effect, at their elevation during the Mass. Otherwise, their view was largely restricted to the celebrant, his assistants and God himself. For donors in search of remission from purgatory, this would have been their most important audience.

In contrast, the plainer post-Reformation communion cup remained on display throughout the service, a reminder not so much of the chalices it replaced but possibly of more frequently visible liturgical objects such as standing silver pyxes, containing a consecrated host. Oman observed that the pre-Reformation *cuppa*, in particular, 'resembled the covered cups in secular use.'<sup>356</sup> The *cuppa* was a type of *ciborium*, a stemmed vessel used to convey the consecrated host away from the altar. This apparent likeness may have transferred the congregation's devotional attentiveness from one element of communion to another. However, unlike the *cuppa*, the post-Reformation cup's contents were not intended to be adored.

Richardson also draws attention to the elaborate rituals surrounding the use of plate in high-status feasting. The use of an auxiliary table under the watchful supervision of the 'yeoman of the ewery' paralleled the pre-Reformation deacon's role in transferring plate between credence table and altar. The ablutions of vessels and celebrant's hands, the laying out of particular cloths in front of him were common to both secular lord at a feast

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<sup>354</sup> Communion (1549), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 27. Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), pp. 135-36.

<sup>355</sup> Fewster, 'East Anglian Goldsmiths', p. 247.

<sup>356</sup> Oman, *English Church Plate*, p. 78.

and priest during Mass. Clad in brocaded and sometimes bejewelled vestments, the priest would have appeared as a spiritual equivalent of a secular lord, even if only for the duration of the Mass. A feasting lord was ‘an entertainment in itself,’ whilst at most Masses the priest ate and drank alone while others watched.<sup>357</sup>

In contrast, the Protestant communion did away with the auxiliary credence table, reverent washing and most of the eucharistic plate. The minister’s appearance and role combined aspects of deacon and priest, and tellingly a descriptive word used for presbyters in the new Ordinal was ‘steward,’ or ‘stewards of thy mysteries’ in the collect for the third Sunday of Advent.<sup>358</sup> In a woodcut illustration in Richard Day’s 1578 *Book of Christian Prayers*, the priest is a surpliced steward who, unlike the kneeling laymen, wears his cap throughout the celebration, a practice that would have been unheard of in the pre-Reformation church, emphasising the dissociation of the Eucharistic prayer from the actual presence of Christ (plate XIX.).<sup>359</sup> In contrast, the laymen are bareheaded, as a gesture of deference to the Lord. Within conventional dining custom, stewards wearing hats would be unthinkable, suggesting that the relative status of guests and steward were reversed in the liturgical feast.<sup>360</sup>

All of these reflected an impression of prestige that was transferrable to the arena of worship, where the Ranworth congregation no longer encountered Christ made visible in the hands of the priest during the Sarum Mass, but the unseen heavenly master of the feast in the Reformed Lord’s Supper. Therefore, the Ranworth cup can be understood as a display object with some affinities to secular plate, just as Eucharistic worship, Catholic and Protestant, had parallels with secular and particularly theatrical feasting. In its liturgical use, it would become a vehicle of a new mode of eucharistic devotion.

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<sup>357</sup> Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>358</sup> Ordinal and Collects (1662), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, pp. 673, 273. These terms had been used previously in the relevant passages of the 1559 Prayer Book.

<sup>359</sup> John Day, *A booke of Christian prayers, collected out of the aunzie[n]t writers, and best learned in our tyme, worthy to be read with an earnest mynde of all Christians, in these daungerous and troublesome dayes, that God for Christes sake will yet still be mercyfull vnto vs* (London: Daye, 1578). STC (2nd ed.) / 6429.

<sup>360</sup> Walter Nelson, ‘Elizabethan Dining’, <<http://walternelson.com/dr/elizabethan-feast>>, [accessed 30 August 2015].

Uniquely among the artefacts under consideration in this thesis, the Ranworth cup is a narrated object. It was used solely in conjunction with the liturgical texts of the Prayer Book Communion and Communion with the sick services. Additional para-liturgical texts such as the *Book of Homilies*, and arguably the *Paraphrases* of Erasmus would have been the sole didactic sources for a sixteenth-century parish such as Ranworth without a licensed preacher.

The historian Norman Jones argues that the Elizabethan Settlement of the Church of England remained a work in progress throughout the 1560s and beyond.<sup>361</sup> The Ranworth cup's date locates its origins as a regional outworking of an incremental national programme aimed at embedding the new Settlement. Until the publication of the Second Book of Homilies in 1563, most small parishes like Ranworth would have been denied any official sacramental preaching since the Edwardian Reformation or even earlier. In the absence of this teaching, the performance of the liturgy gave visual prominence to the cup and narrated its presence that expressed the reality of change to Ranworth's parishioners in both words and action.

The church historian Calvin Lane observes that this didactic vacuum gave worship and its material context a powerful role in forming the devotional life of the Elizabethan Church in the early 1560s: 'Words are not always needed to communicate ideas. [...] Objects can instruct; symbols can teach. [...] Within this unique liturgy-theology model, it is highly likely that the physical aspects of worship made a substantial contribution to the evolution of theology.' Indeed, the subordination of explicit but potentially divisive theology to uniform practice appears to have reflected government concerns about fostering social unity.<sup>362</sup> The Ranworth cup placed on the new wooden table could wordlessly be 'read' in different ways, albeit within a Protestant spectrum of possibilities.

Unlike the steeple cups of secular feasting, the communion cup's role was not static. In the course of a service it would have been handled by everyone present following its presentation in the muted drama of evangelical liturgy. However, its theatricality, like its social context, cannot be ignored. Organised medieval and early modern religion

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<sup>361</sup> Jones, *The English Reformation*, pp. 109-110, 140.

<sup>362</sup> Lane, 'Before Hooker', 320-56 (pp. 320, 323, 333).

deployed drama for an audience accustomed to mystery plays and later a burgeoning secular stage.

The pre-Reformation Mass, as remembered by parishioners born before the early 1540s, was essentially a re-enactment of Christ's self-sacrifice at Calvary, framed by a liturgy adapted from the reforms of the ninth-century Carolingian Renaissance that derived its symbolic language from Biblical, especially Aaronic models, and the ritual pagan theatre of the classical world.<sup>363</sup> This would have been performed close at hand for parishioners, particularly at weekday low masses celebrated at Ranworth's nave altars. The elevation of the host following the miracle of transubstantiation was worshippers' supreme moment of visual reception. **When John Taylor began his ministry as Vicar in 1558, he would have been expected to represent Christ at the altar during Mass. Within a year of his appointment, this dramatic and symbolic role would have been abolished. No longer would the body and blood of Christ be miraculously transubstantiated in his hands.**<sup>364</sup>

Whilst Gibson and others viewed medieval liturgy and religious drama together in one overlapping popular devotional culture, the Protestant eucharist has generally been seen as antithetical to the Elizabethan theatre, often based on the evidence of Puritan objections in the late sixteenth century.<sup>365</sup> The Shakespearian scholar James A. Knapp argues that the rise in popular drama provided a visual outlet in an increasingly image-averse culture.<sup>366</sup> From a cultural and anthropological perspective, the literary theorist Louis Montrose viewed the rise of theatre as a dramatic compensation for the loss of the Mass, giving the populace a sense of mystery, magic and spectacle lacking in Protestant eucharistic worship.<sup>367</sup> However, the early modern drama scholar Huston Diehl contradicts this hypothesis, arguing that such worship was 'meaningful, mysterious, and deeply satisfying' for many sixteenth-century Englishmen and women. Rather than

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<sup>363</sup> Christine C. Schnusenberg, *The Mythological Traditions of Liturgical Drama: The Eucharist as Theater* (New York: Paulist, 2010), pp. 267-69.

<sup>364</sup> Taylor would have been presented to the living of Ranworth by the Crown and therefore likely to have been a conforming Catholic at the time.

<sup>365</sup> **Gail MacMurray Gibson**, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (London: University of Chicago, 1989), p. 174.

<sup>366</sup> Knapp, *Illustrating the Word*, p. 248.

<sup>367</sup> Louis Adrian Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), p. 62.

stifling creative imagination, Diehl cites the Reformed eucharist's early embedding in London as a factor that may have helped to shape playwrights' and playgoers' experience there.<sup>368</sup>

Perhaps paradoxically, in the light of puritan objections, Calvin's attitude to the performance of sacramental worship as the only acceptable visible ornamentation or imagery within a church building is striking. Worshippers themselves, and the artefacts they deployed, formed the only edifying image:

Baptism, and the Supper of our Lord, and the other ceremonies, with which our eyes ought to be sensibly engaged, and more sensibly affected, than to require others formed by human ingenuity.<sup>369</sup>

If theatrical analogies were transposed into sixteenth-century eucharistic worship at Ranworth, the High Mass, staged behind the chancel's closed doors, would appear as a hazy, shimmering musical. Following the Reformation, it became more like a starkly lit but intimate studio play in the round, with simplified props and costumes, sparse gestures and fewer parts, in which the post-Reformation audience were required to participate fully within its narrated action. Although it inevitably retained elements of spectacle, it was one which had been theologically transformed, as Diehl describes it:

In observing the reformed Lord's Supper in the late sixteenth-century English Church, worshippers must acknowledge that the sacramental bread and wine are signs, and not the transubstantiated body and blood of Christ. They must consciously repudiate the old religion's belief that *viewing* [her italics] the Host is salvific. In the absence of any such miraculous spectacle, they must attend to the figurative power of the communal bread and wine. And, they must cultivate a receptivity to the spoken word rather than worship the image.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1997), pp. 93-97.

<sup>369</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: A New Translation*, trans. by Henry Beveridge, 2 vols, (London: James Clark, 1962), I, Book 1, chs.11, 12.

<sup>370</sup> Diehl, *Staging Reform*, p. 98.

Thus, the Ranworth cup is the receptacle of a sign, a narrated object within the drama for the Prayer Book's Eucharistic Prayer. It has also been argued by Diehl that the representational scene of the holy table, with its white cloth, bread and cup, echoed the stark props of the Elizabethan stage, and grouping of the congregation around it had parallels, albeit on a smaller scale, with the semi-circular fronted open-air stages of the Globe and other theatres.<sup>371</sup> Theatrically, the Ranworth cup may be understood within a *tableau vivant* designed to evoke the Last Supper, in which the congregation is present and partakes through enacted remembrance.

Within the simple setting of table topped with a fair linen cloth and possibly a table carpet, served by a linen surplice-clad minister, the cup formed a dramatic centrepiece, a counterpart to banqueting silver, described by Richardson as 'complex elite objects [...] drawing more of their extra-theatrical with them onto the stage because they draw attention to themselves.'<sup>372</sup> She argues that props add immediacy to the unfolding drama that often narrates them because 'they are capable of playing a role in the drama and playing their offstage lives-at the same time.'<sup>373</sup> Where the Ranworth cup differed from theatrical props was that it was kept apart by episcopal injunction from other uses and had no offstage purpose.

The English Reformation shifted the visual focus from the priest, framed by altar and altarpiece to the cup and loaf on the table, to be consumed by all present. The table re-orientated eucharistic action from east-west to north-south, mutely embodying its didactic purpose in re-orientating the laity. Nicholas Ridley, the Edwardian Bishop of London, expressed this action was intended to

move and turn the simple from the old superstitious opinions of the popish mass [...] For the use of an altar is to make sacrifice upon it; the use of a table is to serve men to eat upon. Now, when we come unto the lord's board, what do we

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<sup>371</sup> Diehl, *Staging Reform*, p. 107.

<sup>372</sup> Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture*, p. 195.

<sup>373</sup> Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture*, p. 31.



come for? To sacrifice Christ again, and to crucify him again? Or to feed upon him that was (once only) crucified and offered up for us?’<sup>374</sup>

The 1559 Prayer Book’s exhortations made it clear that ‘lord’s board’ was to be approached only with complete humility after searching self-examination, reparation of wrongs and reconciliation with neighbours, ‘as you shold come holy and cleane to a moste godly and heavenly feast.’<sup>375</sup> The liturgical journey to the table, whether achieved physically or in heart and mind by the congregation, was accompanied by a public declaration of unworthiness, Cranmer’s Prayer of Humble Access.

The communicant’s path to the bread and cup at the ‘heavenly feast’ epitomises the paradox of early Protestant soteriology. The sixteenth-century Christian believer, however devout (and the devout were especially prone to such feelings), was innately unworthy to partake because of their sinful actions. Worthy reception was only possible by divine grace, through ‘ful trust in goddes mercy, and with a quiet conscience.’<sup>376</sup> It was at this intersection of personal humility and God’s grace that the priestly nature of Christian living would have been realised in the Prayer Book eucharist at Ranworth and elsewhere in England, framed and signified by the table’s setting in the chancel. Before the Reformation, the chancel had been the clerks’ preserve. The medieval historian Dawn Marie Hayes observes that medieval church buildings were conceived in the same somatic terms as St. Paul describes the assembly of believers as Christ’s body.<sup>377</sup>

Buildings were bodies and, like the human forms to which they were so intimately connected, certain parts of churches were more sacred – more reserved – than others. [...] The lifeblood of the church originated in the sanctuary where

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<sup>374</sup> *The Works of Nicholas Ridley*, ed. by Henry Christmas (Lewes: Focus Christian Ministries Trust, 1988), pp. 320, 322.

<sup>375</sup> Communion (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, pp. 131-32.

<sup>376</sup> Communion (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 132. See Rylie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, pp. 27-48.

<sup>377</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 12.14-31.

God was made and in the choir, the location of the clergy who made and witnessed the miracle of transubstantiation.<sup>378</sup>

In medieval somatic understanding, the chancel and sanctuary were the head and heart of the whole building, effectively a church within a church, secluded by the rood screen from more profane activities in the nave. Older worshippers at Ranworth would have remembered the former significance of the sacred space into which they were now invited, to share the seclusion behind closed screen doors that their clerical antecedents had enjoyed during worship. In the gathering around the Lord's table in the chancel, lay communicants replaced the clerks who would have flanked and faced the pre-Reformation altar. However, it was in receiving the cup that they achieved the pinnacle of their Reformed status. This transformation of reception from ordained priest alone to the priestly community of God's elect parallels the change from chalice to cup.

There was great deal of continuity between pre- and post-Reformation church life, not least in the clergy and laity who lived through its changes. Many medieval structures, including parish church buildings survived. However, the discontinuity between chalice and communion cup points to a complex relationship with the past. The continuity sought by Cranmer, Parker and other leading English reformers was between the Church of the Apostolic and Patristic eras and the Church of their time. The ecclesiological disconnection that occurred during the later middle ages was rejected and its material culture damaged or jettisoned. The cups were a small but prominent part of the strategies that included church interior decoration and the more domesticated appearance and behaviour of clergy, who increasingly behaved as other men, abandoning tonsures and growing beards, changing habits for gowns, marrying and openly procreating.

Historical generalisations always carry risks, especially when considering the likely reception of the new cup in Ranworth. However, given the impact of successive phases of reform and reversal experienced in parishes like Ranworth it may be possible to differentiate mentalities chronologically even if not individually. The reforms and reversals that took place in parish life from the beginning of Henrician reform onwards

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<sup>378</sup> Dawn Marie Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place in Medieval Europe, 1100-1389, Studies in Medieval History and Culture*, ed. by Francis G. Gentry, 45 vols (London: Routledge, 2003), XVIII, p. 54.

created disparities of formative experience and different expectations of faith depending on which decade the parishioners had grown up in. Parkhurst's 1561 Injunctions to Norwich Diocese contained implicit recognition that the 1559 Royal Injunctions' requirement that all communicants should know the Catechism was unenforceable, due to the disruption of Mary Tudor's reign. Instead, an ability to recite 'the Articles of the Christian Faith, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments' would suffice as a qualification for communion, marriage and becoming a godparent. Teaching the Catechism was aimed primarily at the young, although older married couples were to be urged to attend instruction with 'young folks unmarried, both for the good example of the youth, and also to learn themselves by hearing, if they by reason of evil education in time of ignorance have not been sufficiently instructed in times past.'<sup>379</sup> It seems remarkable that within a traditional society youth should become role models for their elders, but they were perceived to have been untainted by memories of idolatry. In contrast, older parishioners needed to purge their memories of their former 'evil education' in order to be refilled with beneficial, salvific texts and prayers.

In 1548 the Privy Council issued a directive to bishops that their clergy give 'such good, gentle, and charitable instruction of their simple and unlearned parishioners, that there might be one uniform manner quietly used in all parts of the realm.'<sup>380</sup> However, official teaching on sacramental worship would not appear in Ranworth until the publication of the second *Book of Homilies* in 1563. Instead, guidance was embedded in Cranmer's new liturgies that promoted conformity. This kindly but purposeful leading of English laity in a uniform direction reveals an imposed culture of 'moderation' that clergy, liturgy, plate and buildings would be called upon to serve.

The key didactic texts were Cranmer's Prayer of Humble Access and Exhortations. The latter, especially the stronger versions intended for places where 'the people be negligent to come to the Communion', embodied incremental changes that presumed a general lack of comprehension of evangelical principles and were intended to act as a corrective.<sup>381</sup> In the 1549 Exhortation the laity were invited to feed upon Christ's body and blood

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<sup>379</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, pp. 98, 100.

See also Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, pp. 336-37.

<sup>380</sup> *Prayers of the Eucharist*, ed. by Jasper and Cuming, p. 227.

<sup>381</sup> Communion (1549), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 24.

spiritually, ‘in a Sacrament and Mistry [...] to a moste Godly and heavenly Banket.’ These theological ambiguities contrasted with a clear imperative for communicants ‘not to come but in the mariage garment required of God in scripture’. This garment was woven out of true repentance, clear conscience, neighbourliness and restitution of land and goods where necessary.<sup>382</sup> It is important to recognise that the eucharistic reforms sought by evangelicals were as concerned with the moral transformation of society and good community relationships as teaching Reformed theology.

In the 1552 Exhortations the theological bar was raised to exclude any transcendental beliefs whilst moral prohibitions were effectively lowered by becoming less specific. It is conceivable that some of the devout were too afraid in case they had forgotten their sins, or those who did not wish to partake could engineer public disagreements to disqualify themselves. Significantly, the transgression of watching the eucharist without oral reception was increased in scope to include watching communicants:

[...] yf ye stande by as gasers and lokers of them that do Communicate, and be no partakers of the same your selves. For what thing can this be acompted els, than a further contempt and unkindenes unto God?<sup>383</sup>

Conversely, the Exhortations also make plain that consuming both the bread and wine worthily signified and sealed the true believer’s incorporation into Christ.

This incorporation was offered to Ranworth’s communicants in sickness as well as health in the cup’s other innovative and often overlooked use, the provision for communion in both kinds for the sick. This was intended to be received by a ‘good number’ present in the sick room, except in times of plague, sweating sickness or other contagious diseases. In circumstances where no one else were willing to join them, the sick person and minister could receive together. Day’s *Book of Christian Prayers*, which contains probably the only known image of an Elizabethan Protestant communion, yields another less recognised image (Plates XIX and XX). The cup, however simply rendered by the engraver, is identical to that used in the communion in church image, and the gowned

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<sup>382</sup> Communion (1549), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 24. Matthew 22.11-14.

<sup>383</sup> Communion (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 131.

figure feeding the sick man while the rest of the household, including its womenfolk, keep a cautious and respectful distance, appears to be an image of communion to the sick.

This use for the Ranworth cup may also explain the flared rim it shared with other East Anglian cups and their immediate London antecedents. Obviating the need to raise the bowl to its full height would have speeded up production in busy goldsmiths' workshops but may have also fulfilled a pastoral requirement. Unlike the worshipper in church, to whom the cup would be handed, a sick person may have relied on the minister to hold it. The curved rim would have allowed both to control its angle of delivery. This would have enabled the minister to judge the angle when pouring and the sick communicant's lips would have been more able to control the flow of wine by using their facial muscles. This requirement may explain why flared rims were common to Elizabethan communion cups of all shapes and sizes but used nowhere else. There had been no requirement in the pre-Reformation Church for the cup to be administered to the sick, nor circumstances in secular feasting where a cup would not be held by the person drinking from it.

Although its aseptic qualities were not understood in modern scientific terms, silver was considered a safe material. This knowledge that silver vessels did not taint their contents derived from the ancient world onwards. Silver's protective medicinal qualities would not be appreciated in the sixteenth century and contagion was perceived as an airborne process, rather than a tactile or waterborne one. By happy accident, it helped protect the cup's bearers in its new peripatetic role in the parish, conveying the sacrament to the sick, even 'in the tyme of plague, Swette, or such like other contagious tymes of sickness or diseases'.<sup>384</sup>

Although the cup was intended for the sick, the abolition of requiems and chantries, prayers for the departed and the doctrine of purgatory in the late 1540s meant that any association between the chalice and the dead had been severed. This was a microcosm of

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<sup>384</sup> Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000), pp. 214, 86. Sixteenth-century surgeons' will evidence shows extensive possession of silver surgical instruments, that reflexively gave them added professional status. 'Tents' of gold or silver were used by surgeons to keep wounds open to avoid gangrene setting in. Communion of the Sick (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 170.

the changed nature of ecclesiastical, social, economic and familial institutions that were one of Reformation's principal consequences. Like other early modern Protestant institutions, the cup was intended solely for the living alone in the parish of Ranworth, in sickness and in health, until death did them part.

The parochial cup: from ordained to communal affinity.

This leads to our final perspective, which considers another significant aspect of church plate's identity shift. The massing chalice had been replaced by a simpler cup that embodied moderate reform, but its human associations had also been transformed. Cups replaced the precious but largely concealed objects at the pre-Reformation Mass and became the centrepiece of communal gatherings around the Elizabethan holy table. They also went from being a symbolic distillation of priestly identity to becoming a parochial possession and expression of Eucharistic community. Evidence for this transformation can be discerned in two places at Ranworth; the former on a ledger slab in the chancel, the latter in the communion cup's inscription.

None of Ranworth's pre-Reformation chalices have survived, except in the ghostly outline of a two-dimensional image. The defaced fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century priest's ledger slab in the chancel, traditionally associated with Thomas Sheffield, vicar from 1480 to 1509, shows the recess that formerly accommodated a pair of monumental brasses, a rectangular inscription surmounted by small chalice and host visible above its rim. A comparison with the surviving chalice brass to Robert Fevyr (d. 1519) is shown in Plate XXI. The date of the stripping of the Ranworth chalice brass is unknown, but would have been consistent with officially-sanctioned destruction of reminders of a prohibited devotional past and prayers for the dead.

For clergy of limited means who could not meet the expense of a full figure represented in Eucharistic vestments, the chalice and host represented their ministry in its most appealing form, reminding their flock and successors of their vital role as intermediaries

with God in sacramental worship. This in turn helped to generate prayers for their progress through purgatory. Within forty years of Sheffield's death, this practice and the relationship it commemorated was broken, and ten years after that dissolved irrevocably. The communion cup did not appear on memorials to post-Reformation English clergy.

In the Elizabethan period, Sheffield's memorial would have been beneath the centre of eucharistic worship. Either the new communion table would have been set up over the priest's slab, or communicants would have knelt upon it. It is conceivable that those who knelt there to receive the new cup in their hands in 1567 would be aware of the inversion of priorities their actions represented.

From its introduction, the 1567 cup was associated with a location and a population rather than priest or a church. Its inscription identified it as being intended for the 'towne of Ranworth.' It does not associate itself by mentioning the church's dedication to St Helen and is a parochial object in the Tudor sense of the word, encompassing both ecclesiastical and civil aspects.<sup>385</sup> In its original inception, it is a material relic of archiepiscopal authority stretching into the fundamental unit of the Church of England, the parish. Fliegel has observed how 'the avid acquisition of silver by Englishmen' during this period was also manifested by ostentatious donations of plate to the civic bodies, guilds and colleges that gave them a sense of belonging, obligation and pride.<sup>386</sup> For parishes such as Ranworth that were situated outside the larger towns, their identity as civil as much as ecclesiastical entities meant that the communion cup, inscribed with the name of the 'Towne', became its *de facto* civic plate.

Beyond the walls of St Helen's Church or the sick room, the Ranworth cup's identification with the 'Towne' through its inscription lent itself to a new sense of parochial bonding. The art historian Robert Tittler argues that after the Reformation, 'the local community faced a greater need than ever for a shared historical identity: a fixed star from which to navigate the shoals of rapid change,' and that communal traditions were fostered by 'valuable objects with very local associations.'<sup>387</sup> In larger conurbations

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<sup>385</sup> Robert Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Political Culture, c.1540-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 33-34, 185-86.

<sup>386</sup> Fliegel, 'An Elizabethan Silver Cup with Cover', 34-43 (p. 42).

<sup>387</sup> Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England*, pp. 272-73.

such as Norwich, the loss of pre-Reformation church plate led to an upsurge in acquisition of civic plate and regalia. In smaller settlements, where parish and town were synonymous, the church plate effectively filled both the gap of traditional church and new civic plate. It would form a centrepiece for celebrations of the greatest festivals of the year, Christmas and Easter but would also provide a physical link with church life when carried to the homes of the infirm and dying.

Ranworth's chalice had been transferred by injunction and liturgically from celebrant to laity, and the 1567 cup's consumers were clearly included by its inscription. Its parochial, rather than ecclesiastical identity made it both a civic display object and also a moderating one, a touchstone of public conformity in an age of increasing religious coercion. This conformity was intended to be observed in one's native parish. The Church of England's Canon Twenty-Eight, promulgated in 1603 would exclude non-parishioners from habitual attendance at communion. Clergy and churchwardens were charged with the responsibility of reporting 'strangers' to their parish minister and directing them to return there to receive the sacrament.<sup>388</sup>

Ben Jonson's Scottish contemporary, William Drummond, recorded that when Jonson abandoned recusancy, 'at first his communion in token of true reconciliation, he drank out all the full cup of wine.' Possibly other less famous individuals had their faith publicly proved in a similar but less ostentatious way.<sup>389</sup> Like the goldsmith's touchstone that tested the purity of silver, the Ranworth cup would have tested parishioners' mettle.

Alongside the positive sense of belonging and civic identity that its reception could bestow, there was another, darker narrative that could be applied to the Ranworth cup. The negative connotations of the communion cup, as a touchstone of conformity and a sign of destiny, endorsing not just the salvation of its worthy recipients but also persecution in this life and the future damnation of the unworthy, are unavoidable. The

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<sup>388</sup> *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical treated upon the Bishop of London, President of the Convocation for the Province of Canterbury, and the rest of the Bishops and Clergy of the said Province. And agreed upon with the Kings Majesties License in their Synod begun at London. Anno Dom. 1603* (London: Crook, Kirton and Garthwait, 1665).

<sup>389</sup> G.B. Harrison, *Elizabethan Plays and Players* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1958), p. 183.



Prayer Book's exhortation drove home the dangers of unworthy reception by any who was 'a blasphemmer of god, an hinderer or slaunderer of his worde, an adulterer, or be in malyce, or envye, or any other grievous crime.'<sup>390</sup> Following St. Paul's precept, it warned sinful parishioners that the devil would enter them as they consumed the sacrament, as he entered Judas at the Last Supper, ensuring his eternal destruction, and theirs.<sup>391</sup> This doctrine would be further underlined by Article Twenty-Nine of *The Articles of Religion*. The communion cup was a sign destined to be loved and feared in the godly sense by some parishioners, but loathed and feared in another by those who rejected what it represented.

### Conclusion.

The Ranworth cup and the rest of its genre was both a product of and material agent for the English Reformation. The circumstances of its introduction reveal much about ways in which the process of reformation was embedded during the early years of the Elizabethan Settlement. It was an incremental development from Cranmer's reconfiguration of the eucharist involving lay reception of bread and wine, in which all material connections with the Mass were obliterated. At least in theory, new silver communion cups were formed from dissolved chalices, a literal act of iconoclasm and reformation. Unlike the royally-instituted parish registers and *Paraphrases* or monuments like Holdiche's produced by local patronage, the cup replacement programme was an effective demonstration of episcopally-led reform in a period when bishops struggled to impose other forms of uniformity in their dioceses. The Ranworth cup was a visible expression of reformed eucharistic theology, and a silent agent of change in the absence of widespread eucharistic preaching in parish life.

If the cups were episcopally-ordained, they were in general locally made by Norwich goldsmiths who had confessional as well as commercial reasons to devote several years of their output to this programme. Following Parker's requirement for decency, Norwich workshops made cups characterised by a decorous Calvinist aesthetic, harking back,

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<sup>390</sup> Communion (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, pp. 131-32.

<sup>391</sup> 1 Corinthians 11.27-30.

knowingly or not, to the stripped-down spirituality of Erasmus's *Philosophia Christi*, which stressed the priority of inward faith in Christ that permeated every aspect of the believer's life over following formal doctrines and external ceremonies.

The cups were then purchased by churchwardens, motivated by the threat of an archiepiscopal visitation, who universally surrendered their chalices and used by clergy and parishioners who were called to make quick adjustments in this new cup-sharing arrangement. It must also be remembered that the cup was the only tactile devotional object permitted by the English Reformation, replacing a plethora of beads, medals, sculpture and devotional images, and that most parishioners would handle it only once or twice a year.

Substitution of cup for chalice provided a material instance in which iconoclasm could be transformation as much as destruction. The Edwardian destruction of Ranworth's altars can be viewed as less of an end, and more as a prelude to the new setting up of 'Goddes bord' in the chancel. Unlike its pre-Reformation predecessor, the Ranworth cup was not consecrated before use and neither were its contents, as sanctity shifted away from mediating objects such as church plate to the invisible God on one hand and godly communicants on the other. In greater seclusion than pre-Reformation clerks had experienced beyond the closed screen doors of the chancel, the communicants of 1567 and the years that followed received communion from the new cup, no longer the physical and symbolic property of the parish priest, but of a priestly people. However, the 'converted' pre-Reformation paten that accompanied its use in Ranworth would be likely, in Walsham's words, to 'perpetuate and complicate' communicants' devotional memories.<sup>392</sup> Unlike the communion cup which would be placed into their hands in order to drink from it, there was no Prayer Book rubric to suggest that the paten did not remain firmly in the hands of the clergy, in the medieval manner.

Despite episcopal intentions, the Ranworth cup cannot be regarded as a wholeheartedly Reformed object. Its design embodies the liminality of the Elizabethan phase of England's Reformation, of determined but cautious officialdom meeting instinctive conservatism in many parishes, trying to implement change but not to press too hard.

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<sup>392</sup> Walsham, 'Recycling the Sacred', 1121-1154 (p. 1121).

Instead of introducing sets of beakers, Bishops like Parkhurst required one communal stemmed cup, halfway between chalice and beaker and following Edwardian precedent. Like other elements of the Elizabethan Settlement, this expressed a Church of England frozen at its pivot point between Henrician Catholicism and rigorous evangelicalism. Nevertheless, its partly utilitarian construction combined expediency with a new stylistic turn that contributed to the partial de-medievalization of worship. The cups were moderating, mediating objects set in the midst of the people, touchstones of morality and conformity.

Chapter three.

*Amate Invicem*: Thomas Holdiche's monument, his social position and his legacy.

Introduction.

Thirteen days before his death on 8 August 1579, Thomas Holdiche of Ranworth, gentleman, began his will with these words of commendation:

I commend my soul unto almighty God my maker and redeemer and my body to be buried in such convenient place as shall seem best to my executors, beseeching God of his divine majesty and infinite mercy so to purge and cleanse me from my sins that at the last day I shall appear before the tribunal seat of his deity I may through the merits of Jesus Christ be received into the fellowship and company of the elect and chosen, there to rest in perfect joy and bliss,<sup>393</sup>

The will simply directs his executors to bury him 'in such convenient place' as they felt best. However, their decision was likely to reflect his own wishes when they buried Thomas in St Helen's Church four days later. He is commemorated there by a small, sepulchre-shaped memorial on the south wall of the nave (Plate XXII).

Art historian Nigel Llewellyn stresses the importance of gaining an understanding of the functions and cultural demands that engendered post-Reformation monuments, which

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<sup>393</sup> Will of Thomas Holdiche of Ranworth, proved 28<sup>th</sup> January 1580. Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre. NCC, will register, Flack, 90 In common with other medieval surnames, Thomas's family name had many spellings, including Holdych and Holdich, which is the modern form as used by descendants of the Northamptonshire branch of the family.

were also ‘grounded in a unique set of circumstances: for every funeral monument there was a funeral; for every funeral a death; for every death a life.’<sup>394</sup> This chapter will explore both the monument and its grounding, and in doing so illuminate its subject’s death and life. The purpose of this chapter is to consider what this particular monument may reveal about how post-Reformation values of decency, memory and conformity were expressed through memorialization. Additionally, it reveals much about his position within the Holdiche family and local community and ways in which continuity with the past and affinity with other gentry were expressed during a period of considerable change.

Thomas Holdiche’s monument will be examined from a series of radiating perspectives, beginning with its form and appearance as part of a post-Reformation genre. Secondly, particular attention will be paid to its immediate surroundings within St. Helen’s church, in a former place of liturgical significance and as a manifestation of dynastic presence within the parish. Thomas’s tomb will be considered alongside generational shifts apparent in the Holdiche family’s memorials. The third perspective will lead from Holdiche’s burial location among his peers and forebears to consider his family’s place within East Anglian society; their connections with other gentry, and their roles in processes of reform and counter-reform. Finally, the survival of Holdiche’s will enables this study to be expanded to include artefacts in his possession and use of rhetoric that offer glimpses of his personal beliefs. Thomas’s soul bequest, which makes no reference to the Virgin Mary or communion of saints, reflects to a large extent a discontinuity of belief with his forebears, yet his burial conforms to older traditions as far as they were allowed to persist within the Elizabethan Church. It also reveals his material legacies, offering insight into his tastes and pre-occupations that no doubt informed his executors in their choice and location of his monument.

These perspectives will also be considered in parallel with other Norfolk monuments with similar design features or connections with the Holdiche network of associates. This will demonstrate how Thomas’s tomb exemplifies a complex but conservative

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<sup>394</sup> Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000), p. 35.

response to changed relationships between the living and the departed and with God. This is one of the Reformation's key areas of transformation emphasised by Walsham.<sup>395</sup> Whilst the parish church had become a house of prayer purely for the benefit of the living, the bodies of the privileged departed continued to be buried beneath them and appropriate ways of remembering them needed to be established.

Reformation-era tombs have received scholarly attention from early antiquarians onwards and in recent years monumental historians Peter Sherlock and Nigel Llewellyn have examined their historiography.<sup>396</sup> Sherlock identifies such monuments as a distinctive English genre that is frequently endowed with didactic purposes. Sherlock argues that they are important products of the local elites 'entrusted with enforcing reform, and the group most able to resist it.' Their typical location in parish churches offered authoritative *post mortem* messages for lesser parishioners.<sup>397</sup> However, scholarly attention has usually focussed on outstanding examples: the grandiose, the sculptural, the dynastically significant, those inscribed with texts that affirm or challenge religious change. More modest monuments like Holdiche's tend to slip beneath the academic radar because they are visually unspectacular and apparently mute in expressing faith.

I would argue that this relatively simple monument and its counterparts are worthy subjects for scholarly attention for those exact reasons. Their visual modesty may reflect a limited budget but also a 'decent' aesthetic which paralleled the communion cups and other newly introduced church equipment.

Detailed analysis of Thomas Holdiche's monument.

No records have survived for the commissioning or construction of Thomas Holdiche's monument. Nonetheless it is possible to construe its origination within the relationships that existed between the family, parish church and executors. Having been entrusted with

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<sup>395</sup> Walsham, 'History, Memory and the English Reformation', 898-938 (p. 901).

<sup>396</sup> Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) and Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*.

<sup>397</sup> Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 98.

organising the location of his burial, it is probable that Holdiche's executors were also involved in the commissioning of his monument. Therefore, the monument is likely to reflect their sense of propriety, tastes in memorialisation and available budget. However, the lack of express evidence in Holdiche's will does not mean he had not left them verbal or other written instructions for his monument's design and location.<sup>398</sup> In either case, the position of Holdiche's monument would almost inevitably have required the vicar's agreement. Sir John Taylor was a Marian appointee who may have been a conservative influence on where the monument should be sited within the church and even its content. Conversely, it would have been politically difficult for him to obstruct the wishes of the parish's leading family or their deceased member's testators.

The monument is situated on the south wall of the nave in the vicinity of the former Lady altar. It is relatively small in comparison to medieval monuments. Its external dimensions are W 135cm x H 122cm x D 26cm. It is composed of two types of stone. A limestone ledge is surmounted by a clunch arch with a surrounding portico. Two chunks of stone are missing from the cornice on the portico's gable. Its recess is faced internally with limestone blocks and an inscribed panel which is also likely to be clunch.

Clunch belongs to a group of Upper Cretaceous limestones found in a diagonal band across England from the Dorset coast to North Yorkshire, running through Norfolk from the Wash in the north west southwards through Breckland.<sup>399</sup> Quarries situated between Hunstanton and West Runton in north Norfolk would have provided stone for the local market. It is creamy white in colour with a soft, chalky texture, used as an agricultural, domestic and sometimes ecclesiastical building material in parts of East Anglia. Despite its susceptibility to weathering, clunch was sometimes used to create decorative panelling on exterior walls. It is a versatile but soft stone that needs to be carved soon after quarrying. Traces of white lime or limewash that are still present may have been applied

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<sup>398</sup> Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2009), pp. 83-119. The medieval historian Saul considers how design and location choices were made by the person concerned, in the case of Sir William Paston of North Walsham (d. 1608), the sometimes unreliable role of testators and issues governing the 'geography of commemoration', *ibid.*, pp. 114-19.

<sup>399</sup> Graham Lott, 'Sourcing stone for the conservation and repair of the buildings and monuments of Britain', <<http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/504429/1/.pdf>>, [accessed 30 April 2017].

at the time of the monument's introduction or subsequently, due to a widespread belief that additional lime strengthened the stone's surface.<sup>400</sup> Given the stone's softness, it is perhaps surprising that there are very few traces of graffiti visible anywhere. There are a series of horizontal and diagonal lines similar to some of the marginal stylus markings in the Ranworth *Paraphrases* to the immediate left of the moulding that frames the monument's inscription. The only other possible examples are some curved parallel lines on the surface of the monument's ledge, which could equally be accidental drag-marks. Incised letters on the inscription panel at the centre of the monument's recess have been blocked in black pitch, typically used in the sixteenth century. There are no traces of polychromy evident on the monument.

The portico's transitional style offers an Elizabethan fusion of medieval and classical forms. A depressed perpendicular four-centred arch is framed by a classical gabled portico flanked by fluted pilasters with plain cushion capitals. Under its apex is a heraldic shield, bearing the Holdiche arms of a chevron with three martlets, surmounted by the crescent label of a second son. The hollow inner space evokes a sepulchre in miniature, smaller than the surviving pre-Reformation Easter sepulchre on the north wall of the chancel (Plate XXIII).

The Holdiche monument's recess draws comparison with other recessed features of the church building, which are the Easter sepulchre and *piscina* near the central altar. Both are located in the chancel. The monument bears no physical resemblance to the remains of Ranworth's Easter sepulchre, a large cupboard with a wooden shelf and hinges for its doors. The dimensions of the space between the shelf and top of the structure are H 142cm x W 31.5cm x D 26cm. It is somewhat larger than the internal space of the Holdiche monument but has a surprisingly similar internal volume. The sepulchre's lower level is obscured by an early twentieth-century choir stall and it cannot be determined whether a tomb ever existed beneath it, but its simplicity suggests that it never became more than a purely functional object. The lack of a sculpted surround suggests that it remained a timber construction that possibly had to be reconstructed and draped each year, as well as being permanently watched and lit. Duffy observes that by

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<sup>400</sup> I learned this in conversation with Norwich Lodge Master of the Stonemasons' Guild of St Stephen and St George, 30 April 2017.



the fifteenth century it had become ‘an intense and genuinely popular focus for lay piety and devotional initiative [...] Expressing to the full as it did the late medieval sense of pathos of the Passion, the sepulchre and its ceremonies were also the principle vehicle for the Easter proclamation of the resurrection.’<sup>401</sup> As a consequence, a genre of late medieval tombs developed that echoed the sepulchre’s recess accompanied by an altar-shaped monument in front, frequently referred to as an altar tomb. Altar tombs were generally orientated east-west in church buildings and were not used to celebrate Mass, simply to echo the shape of the altar. As altars contained a chamber known as a sepulchre to house sacred relics under the *mensa* or altar slab, the altar tomb would have suggested mimetically something of the holiness of those buried beneath. Sometimes these monuments functioned as the church’s Easter sepulchre as a means of acquiring posthumous grace for the deceased. A number of good examples still exist in Norfolk, including monuments in East Harling and Kelling Churches (Plate XXIV).

The recessed arch located above ground level means that Thomas Holdiche’s monument bears some resemblance to a sepulchre tomb, albeit on a smaller scale. However, it was constructed after the Reformation, lacks an altar tomb and possesses only a narrow ledge with no obvious function. However, within the living memory of some of Holdiche’s mourners, the rites surrounding the Easter sepulchre would still have been present. Sepulchre tombs no longer had any purpose beyond commemorating the dead, but their empty shape was still a visual reminder of Christ’s burial and resurrection, which was the crucial ground of Protestant hopes.

The Holdiche monument’s inscription is carved onto a recessed slab with a beaded border. The lettering is blocked in pitch and is in black lettering. Erosion of the surrounding stone has given the letters a raised profile (Plate XXV). The text reads:

‘Here under lyeth buried the bodie of ~

Thomas Holdiche one of the Sonnes of ~

Robert Holdiche of Ranworthe Esquier ~

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<sup>401</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 31.

Who died the 8 daye of August. 1579.'

The lack of religious reference in Holdiche's inscription reveals a circumspection that was possibly a more common attitude in the early Church of England than the strident proclamations that would be inscribed on larger tombs as the sixteenth century progressed.

The text differs from its pre-Reformation antecedents by being vernacular but also through its absence of accompanying religious imagery, invocations of God and the saints, or prayer requests for the departed. In the later middle ages, when literacy was increasingly valued, named inscriptions were introduced to guarantee continuing prayers after those who had interred them were themselves long departed. In an age when lay literacy was increasing, the simple act of reading an inscription *Orate pro anima de* equated to a prayer helping to redeem the named person from purgatory. The early modern social historian Barbara Harris gives the example of Sir Thomas and Dame Elizabeth Barnardiston, whose early sixteenth-century tomb in Kedington church, Suffolk bears a revealing inscription. In return for saying a Paternoster and six credos for the couple's repose, 'Ye shall have a hundred days of pardon to your name.'<sup>402</sup> This kind of officially-sanctioned reciprocal transaction, in which the reader's good work could be traded against the deceased's sins, was purged at the Reformation. Many brass inscriptions bearing *orate pro anima* and *cuius animae propicitetur deus* inscriptions were removed during the early Reformation period to prevent prayers for the souls of the departed from being said.<sup>403</sup>

Post-Reformation epitaphs were shorn of such intentions. No longer functioning as prayer generators for the privileged dead, they came to be sites of memory and continuing prestige, or sources of moral or spiritual example. Therefore, Holdiche's monument stands in marked contrast to nearby ledger tombs from the fifteenth and early

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<sup>402</sup> Barbara J. Harris, 'The Fabric of Piety: Aristocratic Women and Care of the Dead, 1450-1550', *Journal of British Studies*, 48, 2, Special Issue on Material Culture (April 2009), 308-55 (pp. 308-09).

<sup>403</sup> However, the loss of brasses through metal theft in subsequent centuries mean that deliberate iconoclasm is harder to prove in this genre compared to panel painting, for example, and a number of *orate pro anima* brasses have survived at Ranworth.

sixteenth centuries. Its characteristics match those described by art historian Phillip Lindley:

By the late sixteenth century, contemporary tomb-monuments differed dramatically from those found before the Reformation. [...] the categories of church in which they could be housed had been restricted by the dissolution of monastic houses and friaries, and their locations within the church often changed. [...] The length and subject matter of their inscriptions had changed dramatically, accompanying fundamental shifts in the monuments' cultural functions [...] above all, the abolition of references to Purgatory, the near-complete absence of traditional Christian religious subject matter – perhaps most obviously, the loss of images of the saints – and the very restricted religious and institutional roles now permitted to the tomb monument, which would have struck a pre-Reformation observer.<sup>404</sup>

By the time of Holdiche's death, these new conventions were in widespread use. His epitaph is vernacularized and shorn of all associations with posthumous prayer except for the precise date for remembrance. It also eschews new forms of Protestant religious expression, of evangelical encouragement, virtuous example or moral precept. There is no suggestion in the wording of discreet Catholicism, whose persistence was observed by Sherlock. Unlike Edward Warde's monument at Bixley Church in Norfolk, it does not reflect epitaphs' period tendency to become 'more discursive and communicate[d] a stronger sense of discrete identity and unique experience.'<sup>405</sup> Ward's inscription combined his familial achievements with *memento mori* references that transcended the Reformation's purge of epitaphs:

In fatall tombe a squire here lys inshrynde by Deathe,

one Edward Warde who left of twelve, ten Children deare

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<sup>404</sup> Phillip Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship: Medieval Monuments in Early Modern England* (Donnington: Tyas, 2007), pp. 38-39.

<sup>405</sup> Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 86.

Wyth Anne his loving wife: On Maye Day past his Breathe

and Soule to God by Christe, though senceless corp lye heare.

Objt 1583      Aetatis suae 41

In contrast, Holdiche's epitaph presents a Stoicism characteristic of classicism, another period genre: 'the two requirements for this post-Reformation, Renaissance formula were brevity and imitation of antiquity.'<sup>406</sup> The seventeenth-century antiquary Thomas Fuller opined that 'the shortest, plainest and truest Epitaphs are best. For when a passenger sees a chronicle written on a tomb, he takes it on trust that some great man lies buried, without taking great pains to examine who he is.'<sup>407</sup> For a monument such as Thomas Holdiche's, the absence of any written epitaph leaves only his personal identity and dynastic status as his message to posterity. The opening words of his inscription 'Here under lyeth the bodie of Thomas Holdiche' indicate his desirable resting place under the nave floor and therefore his rank within the parish.

The portico is surmounted by a heraldic shield. It displays the Holdiche arms on what would have been an azure ground with silver chevron bearing three black martlets, had they been coloured. The shield is surmounted by a crescent cadency label, representing a second son. These colours have either completely disappeared from the Holdiche monument or were never applied (Plate XXVI). Although having an uncoloured heraldic shield may appear to reduce its role in identification, it is worth considering the Holdiche monument's combination of arch, heraldry and portico can be observed in another Norfolk monument of similar date that offers a close overall resemblance, albeit on a larger scale. The 1583 monument to Edward Warde was erected on the north chancel wall of St Wandregesilius's Church, Bixley (Plates XXVII and XXVIII).<sup>408</sup> Warde's escutcheon, helmet and crest show no trace of colour, even in photographs taken before

<sup>406</sup> Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 212.

<sup>407</sup> Thomas Fuller, quoted by F.T. Havergal. *Monumental Inscriptions in the Cathedral Church of Hereford* (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1881), p. xv.

<sup>408</sup> The Warde memorial was dismantled and placed in storage following an arson attack that gutted Bixley Church in 2004. It was not possible to measure overall dimensions as a consequence. I am most grateful to the Crown Point Estate, Kirby Bedon, for allowing me to examine the monument.

the catastrophic fire in Bixley Church, even though fine detail, such as the ermine on the escutcheon's diagonal band would have been enhanced by this treatment.

In a culture highly attuned to symbolism, the Holdiche's three martlets were potentially significant. The English heraldic martlet is a stylised bird, resembling a house martin or swift, most famously used in the posthumous arms of Edward the Confessor. It does not appear in the Bodleian *Bestiary*, but is used symbolically by Shakespeare in 'The Tragedy of Macbeth':

Banquo:        'This guest of summer,  
                      The temple-haunting martlet, does approve  
                      By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath  
                      Smells wooingly here. No jutting, frieze,  
                      Buttress, nor coign of vantage but this bird  
                      Hath made his pendant bed and procreant cradle;  
                      Where they most breed and haunt I have observed  
                      The air is delicate.<sup>409</sup>

The literary J.P. Dyson observes that in Banquo's lines the 'temple-haunting' martlet becomes the locus of positive medieval values within the play; hospitality, religion, heaven, procreation, family, rest and security.<sup>410</sup> The image is drawn from Psalm 84.3:

Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she may  
 lay her young: even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.<sup>411</sup>

The Psalmist rejoices in spending time, like the bird, in the Temple courts. Given the Holdiche family's apparent involvement in the adornment of Ranworth Church, this emblem seems very appropriate. Due to his unmarried status, the martlets are larger and

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<sup>409</sup> Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, I. 6. 3-9, in *The Complete Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. by Wells and Taylor, III, pp. 1307-1334 (p.1313).

<sup>410</sup> J.P. Dyson, 'The Structural Function of the Banquet Scene in Macbeth', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 14, 4 (Autumn 1963), p. 369.

<sup>411</sup> Psalter (1662), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 546.

therefore more visible than they would have been if the Holdiche arms had been paired with another family's.

It is only on close inspection of the ledge that the monument's probable incompleteness becomes apparent. The limestone ledge has been patched with cement. The surface has an irregular edge where stone has mostly been broken away at the edge of the repair, but at the left edge a deliberately cut out rectangular area is visible. The shape of the cement repair against the back wall of the monument would correspond with the footprint of a small profile figure kneeling at a rectangular desk. The square east end of the cut away section of the ledge implies that the profile figure on the monument was kneeling behind a stool or prayer desk, which would characteristically have supported an open book.

Photographs of the nave taken before the 1899 restoration show an irregular object beneath the inscription.<sup>412</sup> Unfortunately, the photographs were taken from the rear of the nave and lack clear detail. There are also two large rectangular areas flanking Thomas Holdiche's memorial that are much darker than the surrounding whitewashed wall. These are possibly painted plaster or stone. In the late nineteenth-century restoration, the church's walls were stripped of plaster and then rendered, erasing any wall paintings and with them, much of the monument's original context. It is possible that Thomas Holdiche's memorial was grouped with painted memorials, forming the centre of a commemorative triptych that may have recalled other members of his family. The monument is not mentioned in the diocesan faculties issued for the restoration work, so whatever remained of the monument's figure may have been 'tidied up.' The restorers' emphasis was to re-medievalise Ranworth Church and without a kneeling Elizabethan figure the Holdiche tomb is more in keeping with the Perpendicular window above it and the adjacent screen altarpiece.<sup>413</sup>

The presumed kneeling figure of Thomas Holdiche would have given the monument a much less medieval appearance than it presently has, complementing the portico surround. The art historian Nigel Llewelyn states that this kind of memorial sculpture did

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<sup>412</sup> Payne Jennings, *Sun Pictures of the Norfolk Broads: One Hundred Photographs from Nature of the Rivers and Broads of Norfolk and Suffolk*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Ashted: Jennings, 1892).

<sup>413</sup> Ranworth's restoration was undertaken by J.T. Micklethwaite, Surveyor of the Fabric of Westminster Abbey, until his death in 1906.

not occur in England before the Reformation. The deceased were not depicted by kneeling effigies, although their stone mourners sometimes were.<sup>414</sup> However, they did appear kneeling on memorial brasses.

The profile of the missing area of Thomas Holdiche's monument ledge tapers off towards the west, suggesting that the figure was kneeling, with the hem of his gown trailing behind him. This pose symbolised both devotion and humility. Llewellyn observes that

Among post-Reformation audiences, piety, submission and humility were a potent combination and a monument with kneeling figures set upon it, their gazes directed towards the altar, was a most prestigious realisation of this potential.<sup>415</sup>

The footprint of the monument's repaired ledge would support the hypothetical figure's east facing orientation. This display of Holdiche's piety would have been simultaneously obvious but potentially subversive. Llewellyn's use of the word 'altar' in post-Reformation contexts does not reflect the terminology or physical reality of the period, if understood literally. Following the smashing of altars from the 1550s onwards, tables became the moveable *loci* of the Lord's Supper, occupying a range of positions from the nave front to behind closed rood screen doors in the chancel. They would not have remained *in situ* when not in use. Instead, the holy tables were directed to be placed against the east wall of the church at all other times.<sup>416</sup> For a chancel memorial, an eastward-orientated effigy would have approximately faced the former location of the high altar. In the case of the Thomas Holdiche effigy, it would have knelt towards the site of the former Holy Kinship nave altar, a vanished focus for devotion that would still exist in some people's memories in 1579.

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<sup>414</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 105. Art historian Kim Woods observes that Guido Mazzoni produced a design for Henry VII's tomb that would have incorporated kneeling subjects, but this was never realised. See also 'The activation of the image: expatriate carvers and kneeling effigies in late Gothic Spain', Kim Woods, *Sculpture Journal*, 26, 1 (2017), 11-22

<sup>415</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 103.

<sup>416</sup> Calvin Lane, *The Laudians and the Elizabethan Church: History, Conformity and Religious Identity in Post-Reformation England* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), p. 9.

It is important to recognise the difficulties in considering a monument that apparently lacks its visual centre. In trying to offer a reasonable reconstruction of Holdiche's proposed figure on his monument it is informative to consider the carved figures in the frieze above the Warde monument's inscription (Plate XXIX). The figures of Edward and his wife kneel facing one another with a prayer desk bearing two open books placed centrally between them. Following period convention, their three daughters kneel behind his wife, and nine sons behind the father. However, beyond giving an overall impression of how the Holdiche monument may have appeared with a single kneeling figure, there are significant differences. The figures are placed above the inscription, rather than standing on the ledge, and are relief carvings that are integral to the monument's rear slab, that has been recessed to a depth of around 2.5cm between the figures.

The 1611 mural monument to Robert and Elizabeth Suckling in St. Andrew's, Norwich, and the cenotaph altar monument to Sir Robert Houghton of 1623 in St. Mary's, Shelton in south Norfolk potentially offer examples of half or three-quarter relief figures within an arched memorial, albeit from a slightly later period (Plate XXX and XXXI).

Houghton was buried in St. Dunstan's in the West, where he and his wife Mary have a prominent memorial. He is depicted on the monument in Shelton kneeling in his scarlet King's Bench judge's robes next to Mary and opposite his son Francis. Whilst Robert's effigy is free-standing, his wife's is a half image, giving some indication of how Thomas Holdiche's effigy was constructed even if not its appearance (Plate XXXI). Incidentally, a connection would form between the Houghtons and Holdiches beyond this period. In 1650 Sir Robert's son Robert purchased the Ranworth estate from Sir Richard Sidley, who had acquired it on his marriage to Elizabeth Holdiche, the last heiress of the Ranworth branch of that family.<sup>417</sup>

The physical location of Thomas Holdiche's tomb.

Thomas Holdiche's burial and commemoration within St Helen's church reflects his family's temporal pre-eminence in the parish. The Holdiches were a knightly family who

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<sup>417</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, (1806), v, pp. 447-59.



appeared in Norfolk in the mid-fourteenth century and moved their seat to Ranworth during the fifteenth century. Although he never became squire, Thomas appears to have been the senior male member of his family at the time of his death and his interment under the church floor followed ancient custom.

The Council of Mainz decreed in 813 that burial within churches was permitted for senior clergy, kings, princes and patrons. By the fifteenth century, the custom of burials within the footprint of church buildings had become highly desirable for those who could afford it and whose prestige necessitated it. During this period, this privilege had extended downwards from the ranks of the nobility and gentry to larger householders and their immediate families. It was fuelled by a late medieval economy of salvation that was both financial and spiritual. Prayers and masses could be paid for to quicken the soul's passage through Purgatory. For those whose sanctity of life promoted them immediately to heaven or whose manifold sins and unbelief condemned them irrevocably, this stage would be avoided. However, expectations for the vast majority of Christians were that a lengthy, painfully corrective intermediate *post mortem* phase would be their inevitable destiny. Proximity to the living church, gathered for worship in a consecrated building, conferred upon the privileged dead continuing access to its intercession and blessings.

This privilege distinguished the clergy and local lay elite from other parishioners. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the vast majority of the population would have been buried in churchyards. Whilst this excluded them from proximity to most of the liturgical activities of the living church, it was the best that they could hope for. Churchyards' consecration meant that their curtilage was regarded as spiritually protected space by medieval Christians, a place of sanctuary with almost magical properties for the living and departed. Although evangelical reformers abolished religious practices that supported superstition, the principle of sanctity in church and churchyard was maintained. The Brawling Act of 1551 demanded heavier penalties for those caught fighting in its precincts, but also an act of reconciliation to occur before its religious purposes could be resumed.<sup>418</sup> It is important to note that whilst the material objects of worship such as communion tables, books and plate were de-sacralised in the English Reformation, consecrated grounds and parish churches could still be regarded as having

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<sup>418</sup> 5 and 6 Edward VI, cap.4, (1551-2).

been desecrated. This may help to explain why tombs and their occupants were largely respected, once shorn of idolatrous imagery, references to prayer or chantry masses.

Prior to the Reformation, burial within the church building conferred significant additional spiritual benefits. The need to create more internal grave spaces gave a logical impetus for the widespread rebuilding of naves, addition of aisles and porches that occurred in East Anglia in the century leading up to the Reformation than the modest population growth during that period. Increasing floor space in East Anglian churches was frequently as much to do with accommodating the dead as the living. Ranworth's fifteenth-century north porch, which stylistically post-dates the smaller south porch, would typify such a purpose. Although the floor is modern and does not contain any surviving memorials, the North porch's upper storey contains a chamber that would have housed a chaplain or chantry priest whose ministry was primarily intended to offer relief for departed individuals or guild members.

The early sixteenth-century churchwardens' accounts for St. James's church in Louth, Lincolnshire, reveal an example of the important income that internal grave spaces generated, with graves in church costing 6s 8d and burial in the south porch for 3s 8d.<sup>419</sup> This financial advantage counterbalanced congregational discomfort. Corpses were generally buried in shrouds under the church floor, and no amount of strewn rushes and sweet herbs could mask the rising smell of decomposition. Although these practices were shorn of their spiritual advantages by the Reformation, they continued until legal reform in the nineteenth century prohibited them. It is a sign of Thomas Holdiche's wealth that his executors could pay for his burial in St. Helen's and provide a permanent monument, and status that meant he could be both buried and memorialised there.

The privileged deceased were kept close to the worship of the living congregation. Effigies, inscriptions and heraldry perpetuated their identity and called them to mind in prayer. Harris has observed the proprietary attitudes of landowning families towards parish churches, which would already have been long established by the beginning of the

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<sup>419</sup> R. C. Dudding, *The First Churchwardens' Book of Louth 1500-1524* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1941).

sixteenth century.<sup>420</sup> In addition, she states that their memorial projects were also intended to symbolise familial status and wealth:

In a culture that believed that the social and political hierarchy was part of the divine order of creation, they saw no contradiction in designing projects that embodied both their worldly and their spiritual aspirations.<sup>421</sup>

Llewellyn observes that post-Reformation monuments ‘are invariably orthodox because their subjects were in the public eye, educated, politically active and under public obligation to conform to the new law.’<sup>422</sup> Nevertheless, they continued to address posterity, evoking a sense of the identity, status and beliefs of the early modern English elite.<sup>423</sup> Following these new conventions, Thomas Holdiche’s tomb inscription conveys his name, earthly status, location and dates without any reference or benefit to his soul. However, a sense of his public identity is strongly inferred by his tomb design and location.

In common with other East Anglian gentry, the Holdiches treated their parish church as a family mausoleum. They also appear to have extended provision of grave space to their higher status associates, members of knightly or baronets’ families. Julian Litten, Chairman of the Ledgerstone Survey of England and Wales, notes that one of the generally observed conventions of internal church burials was that prominent local figures would be placed in the centre aisle, whilst wealthy bachelors and spinsters would be interred in side aisles.<sup>424</sup> This would correspond with the relative positions of the memorials to Thomas Holdiche, set into the south-east wall of the aisleless nave of St. Helen’s, and his parents’ ledger stone centred at the rood screen’s entrance. Thomas Holdiche’s monument stands in close proximity to inscriptions inlaid in the ledger stones of previous generations of Ranworth families of means such as the Irlings, Bunnes and Kings buried on the south side of the nave. There is also a ledger for a member of

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<sup>420</sup> Harris, ‘The Fabric of Piety’, 308-55 (p. 312). Harris remarks that Revisionist writers have used this dynastic continuity as evidence for that the status quo of the pre-Reformation Church was maintained at parish level.

<sup>421</sup> Harris, ‘The Fabric of Piety’, 308-55 (pp. 312-13).

<sup>422</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 346.

<sup>423</sup> Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 1.

<sup>424</sup> Julian Litten, ‘Ledger Stones’, <<http://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/ledger-stones/ledger-stones.htm>>, [accessed 19 April 2017].

another elite family, the Berneys of Reedham.<sup>425</sup> This raises an intriguing possibility that the bodies of unmarried members of prominent families may have been interred in the churches of lesser associates to preserve grave spaces in their heartland churches, whilst bolstering the prestige of their host parishes with their illustrious presence.<sup>426</sup>

At the front of the nave in central position is a very large Purbeck marble ledger stone centred on the rood screen of c.1470. It is flanked by five other ledgers in front of the screen dado that fills the chancel arch. The church architect stipulated that the ledger stones removed temporarily for the nave re-flooring were to be mapped and returned to their original location following the nave's restoration in 1899.<sup>427</sup> J.T. Micklethwaite, a pioneering architectural conservator, was meticulous in the preservation of medieval stonework at Ranworth. This preserved the existing layout of memorials and therefore a significant context for Thomas Holdiche's monument. The central ledger's south-east corner has been cut to fit against a fourteenth-century floor tile beneath a dado post. The stone, measuring L 128cm x W 113cm bears the indents of a shield, a rectangular inscription and a sacred heart, all missing, with three rectangular brass panels bearing texts from Job 19 in a radiating pattern above the heart that remain in St. Helen's. However, in the nineteenth-century Norfolk antiquarian Walter Rye's notebook there is a description of a ledger stone accompanied by his drawing of an inlaid brass shield, bearing the arms of Holdiche, Jernegan and Fincham, erroneously identified by Rye as Fitz Osbert.<sup>428</sup> This would identify the tomb with Thomas's father, Robert and his two wives, Joanna Fincham and Margaret Holdiche. Joanna was Robert's first wife and mother of Thomas, and her obit is recorded in the calendar of the Ranworth Antiphoner.<sup>429</sup> Robert Holdiche died around the start of 1559, and his will states his burial wishes:

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<sup>425</sup> A surviving brass inscription inlaid in a ledger stone in front of the Lady altar commemorates Alicia Berney, daughter of John Berney of Reedham.

<sup>426</sup> In 1620, Richard Berney, Sheriff of Norfolk, was elevated to the baronetage.

<sup>427</sup> 'Specification A. of Works required to be done about the Nave of the Parish Church of Ranworth in the Diocese of Norwich' J.T. Micklethwaite, & Clarke, Somers, 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster (1899). Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre. NRO DN/COV164.

<sup>428</sup> NRO Rye 6 A Norris II p.214. Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre.

<sup>429</sup> Ranworth, St Helen's Church. *Antiphonarium ad usum Sarum* MS (Norwich? c. 1460), fol. 162<sup>r</sup>.

I will my body to be buried, if it chance me to depart this transitory life within twenty miles of Ranworth, in the parish church of Ranworth by my first wife, Jahane Fincham, the daughter of John Fincham of Owtewell, gentleman, and so laid by here that my [wife] that now is, Margaret, the daughter of Edward Jernegan, while he lived in Lovingland in Suffolk, esquire, chancing to depart this transitory life at Ranworth aforesaid or near there, may lie by me one the other side of me, if she will, so that I shall lie then between both my said wives.<sup>430</sup>

The rood screen has been variously dated between the 1450s and 1470s, whereas Margaret died in 1559. It is therefore likely that she would have been buried with Robert and Joanna in a vault beneath the church, together with previous generations of the family, and that an existing ledger was inlaid with their arms and a new inscription. This appropriation of an older memorial was a typical practice that would continue nationally into the eighteenth century. Examples of this practice can be found locally at St Peter Mancroft Church in Norwich. The re-used tomb occupied by Thomas's parents reflects the tastes and priorities of a mainly Catholic faith. Although the usurpation of memory and grave space may seem surprising to a modern audience, accustomed to the permanence of graves following nineteenth-century legislation, the London historian Vanessa Harding's research into London burials found that churchwardens frequently ejected older memorials and smaller slabs from the mid-fifteenth century onwards.<sup>431</sup>

Rye's notebook records another ledger nearby that still possessed a brass shield bearing the arms of Holdiche and Southwell, most likely marking the grave of Thomas's great-grandparents, John and Elizabeth (née Southwell). Thomas's grandparents, John Holdiche and Elizabeth Felmingham were buried under the floor of the Norwich Blackfriars' Church, with a nearby wall monument inlaid with brass depictions of

an image of our *Lady* and *John Holdiche*, kneeling on one side, and their two sons by him, and an inescutcheon of his arms; and on the other side *Robert*

<sup>430</sup> Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre. Will of Robert Holdiche, esquire, of Ranworth, 1558, TNA PROB 11/42/A, fols 151-54.

<sup>431</sup> Vanessa Harding, 'Burial Choice and Burial Location in Later Medieval London', in *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and Dead 1000-1600*, ed. by Steven Bassett (Leicester: Leicester University, 1992), pp. 119-35.

*Felmingham* [her second husband] in his coat-armour, and herself and three daughters by her, in their winding-sheets, in the middle.<sup>432</sup>

This suggests that Elizabeth was a prominent patron of the Dominican house. The Blackfriars' dissolution and transformation of its nave into the City Corporation's 'New Hall' would have prevented any further Holdiche burials there. It therefore seems likely that the burial strategy for Robert and his wives involved interment within their parish church at Ranworth in a position that accorded with their status.

Unless there had been some kind of long-standing agreement within the parish not to use the prime position in front of the rood screen doors, it is more than likely that this space would have been used by the first generation of lay donors. In that case, the ledger stone would have belonged to an earlier burial, dating from the nave's rebuilding in 1453. If this were already a Holdiche grave, the same vault as well as stone could have been used. Re-using an old grave whilst preserving John Holdiche's more recent inscription nearby would have reflected a pragmatic approach to the issues of limited grave space and the need to share out spiritual benefits of underfloor burials. By the time of Margaret's interment, the earlier occupants of the tomb would have enjoyed decades of remitting prayer and rites. It was perhaps time for a more recent generation to be relieved of Purgatory's burden.

Within the liturgical setting for pre-Reformation burial rites, the large ledger stone's location at the entrance to the chancel would have been one of the optimal sites for reducing the soul's sojourn in purgatory. During Sarum funeral rites, coffins would be brought into church in procession and placed on a bier standing on top of this privileged grave space. The sprinkling and censing, the prayers for absolution of the departed offered over each successive coffin would also fall on the grave beneath, bringing valuable remissions to its occupants.<sup>433</sup>

Liturgical use of this location would be excised from the rubrics of the first Book of Common Prayer's funeral rite. The funeral procession was directed to move straight from

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<sup>432</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, ch. 42, pt 2, pp. 329-367.

<sup>433</sup> For an overview of medieval Catholic funeral rites see Monti, *A Sense of the Sacred*, pp. 594-615.

the lych or coffin gate of the churchyard to its grave without entering the church. Following the Prayer Book's restoration in 1559, Englishmen's and women's bodies would no longer be sprinkled with holy water and brought into church to the sound of bells, laid out whilst *diriges* were sung and widows and paupers watched over them. No requiems would be offered or 'mass pence' distributed for the repose of their souls.<sup>434</sup> Perhaps even more significant than the loss of preliminaries and truncation of funerals in transforming the rituals of Tudor bereavement was the termination of the religious activities that perpetuated memory, such as prayer for the departed, keeping the month's mind, annual obits or masses, or for the affluent, perpetual chantry masses.

Thomas Holdiche's monument was only separated from Margaret's funeral by an interval of twenty-one years but belongs to an entirely different era of memorialisation. Unlike the ledger-type memorials or indeed later wall plaque memorials fixed into the wall by metal rods, his monument would have needed to be filled in and its portico chiselled off in order to be replaced. This added inconvenience may have been part of an intention to create a long-lasting memorial for someone with no direct descendants.

What is striking is the unique form of Holdiche's memorial in Ranworth Church. Not only does it differ in plane, form and materials to its pre-Reformation antecedents, it has no peers. There are no other surviving wall monuments at Ranworth before the early nineteenth century. Unlike his brothers Richard and Miles or nephew John, Thomas did not achieve the position of a squire, yet no memorial survives for any other member of his generation and their successors. It is possible that they had painted memorials on the nave wall that did not survive the re-plastering of the nave in the early twentieth century. There are also other ledger slabs near the rood screen with missing and unrecorded inscriptions and shields that may have commemorated them. However, this would not account for the cost or superior appearance of Thomas's monument. This hints at his importance within the family and local community. It is also important to point out that his monument was posthumous. The monumental historian Sally Badham offers Robert Bunne's ledger inscription in Ranworth as an example of a monument that existed in the

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<sup>434</sup> For common English funeral rites see Sally Badham, *Seeking Salvation: Commemorating the Dead in the Late Medieval Parish* (Donnington: Tyas, 2016), pp. 187-97.

lifetime of the person it was intended to commemorate.<sup>435</sup> She cites the long gap left for the date of his death (1521) on the inlaid brass plaque as evidence that it was added later. This would have benefitted Bunne in two ways. First, it would have reserved a prominent and desirable grave space. Secondly, it would have provided him with a personalised *memento mori* on each visit to church. In contrast, Holdiche's posthumous memorial would benefit only those who outlived him.

Unlike his forebears, Thomas's resting place had no physical association with the funeral rites of the Church, apart from a truncated form of committal. In the pre-Reformation Church, burial beneath the bier's location guaranteed additional funerary intercession and blessings. Alternatively, a sepulchre tomb could also act as a prayer receptacle in its short but intense use during the pre-Reformation Holy Week rites. Duffy observes that Easter sepulchres in use often resembled a funeral 'hearse' or bier, making a symbolic connection between Christ's burial and the believer's funeral and month's mind ceremonies.<sup>436</sup> The 1552 Prayer Book abandoned the practice of celebrating communion at funerals and the Holy Week and Easter rites would have ceased twenty years before Thomas's death. However, although Thomas's monument had some superficial resemblance to a pre-Reformation sepulchre tomb, this would have been negated by the presence of a kneeling figure inside the customarily empty recess.

Whilst these connections with traditional rites can be largely discounted, Thomas's monument may have been overlaid on former sacramental activity in the nave. Plate XXXII shows the monument in relation to Ranworth's Lady Altar which would have been used at weekday masses before the Reformation. These Masses celebrated at nave altars were very popular, due to the increased visibility of the consecrated host in comparison to the High Mass. It also seems probable from its proximity to the altar that Holdiche's monument occupied the recess of a former *piscina*, the place where the sacred vessels were washed at the end of the Mass. These Low Masses are likely to have ended at Ranworth by around 1550 at the latest.

A revealing clue about the former use of that part of the nave's south wall has been left visible by the early twentieth-century restorers who removed the surface of the

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<sup>435</sup> Badham, *Seeking Salvation*, p. 214.

<sup>436</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 29-30.



monument's surroundings and re-plastered the interior walls. There are two ashlar limestone blocks adjacent to the monument's eastern edge. Given the typically East Anglian construction of Ranworth's church walls from flint, mortar and rubble, this indicates that they formed part of once visible masonry features. They have a chamfered western edge, suggesting that they framed a wall opening, and the lower block's edge shape changes from the chamfer to a right angle near the bottom via a concave moulding at roughly 97.2cm above the present floor level (Plate XXXIII). This suggests that it had framed an earlier recess.

Comparison with a relatively intact *piscina* from the nearby St. Margaret's Church, Upton strongly suggests that Holdiche's monument had been let into the recess of a former *piscina* located close to the Lady altar (Plate XXXIV). The Upton example's recess demonstrates the narrowness of many nave altar *piscinae*. If Ranworth's Lady altar *piscina* had a similar depth, there would have been no need to reduce the depth of recess to make the monument's inscription and proposed effigy more visible. The monument's makers would probably have extended the recess westwards to enlarge the space for an arched inscription and effigy. The re-use of this former place of cleansing eucharistic vessels is visibly evident in the deeply recessed joint between the chamfered blocks and edge of the monument. It would be difficult to believe that this could not have been concealed by replacing the limestone blocks or simply plastering over the gap. In the soul bequest that began his will and this chapter, Thomas prayed for his soul's cleansing. Through his executors' choice of location or possibly his own, his monument was placed where previous generations of clerks had washed away trace of the sacraments and cleansed their consecrated vessels. Occasionally medieval *piscinae* have yielded artefacts such as chalices and cruets when excavated, having been used as places of concealment.<sup>437</sup>

The 1899 restoration specification states that as well as taking special care of ledger stones that retained their brasses, the workmen also needed to take special care of the

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<sup>437</sup> A fourteenth-century earthenware cruet was discovered in the drain of a medieval *piscina* during restoration work on Eglwys Gymyn, near Pendine, Carmarthenshire. See the Experience of Worship in Late Medieval Cathedral and Parish Church, <[http://s361690747.websitehome.co.uk/EoW2/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/da09\\_cruet.pdf](http://s361690747.websitehome.co.uk/EoW2/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/da09_cruet.pdf)>, [accessed 21 September 2018]. Discoveries of pre-Reformation chalices in *piscina* drains have also been recorded.

‘two altar stones which now lie on the floor west of the rood screen.’<sup>438</sup> This suggests that when the nave altars were destroyed in the sixteenth century, their tops were laid as part of the floor rather than removed from the building. The area they occupy is now permanently concealed by wooden plinths supporting the altars that were introduced by the vicar, Revd. Hawtrey Enraght, in the late 1900s, so their location cannot be verified. However, it does raise the question of whether the fragments of altar slab visible in the wall beneath the Holy Kinship reredos belonged to another altar, possibly the former high altar. The immediate context of Thomas Holdiche’s tomb, whether or not it is in the place of a former *piscina*, appears to have been highly eucharistic, even though the liturgy of his funeral would no longer have conveyed this.

It is also important to consider the possible relation between Thomas’s memorial and other monuments within the precinct of the pre-Reformation Lady altar. If Thomas Holdiche’s tomb relates through its location to a former *piscina*, then the location of Alicia Berney’s ledger stone also needs to be considered. Alicia’s stone is aligned with the centre of the medieval altar and also with the panel depicting the Virgin and Christ child. Her stone is much narrower than the Holdiche ledgers, and its length is concealed under a fixed platform introduced in the early twentieth century. If its present position matches its original place as the conservation architect’s specification suggests, Alicia’s grave would be more or less under the priest’s feet in front of the altar during mass. She would not have received the benefit of receiving additional blessings at funerals, but transubstantiation would regularly have occurred above her. Alicia Berney’s tomb also asks questions of the *Holy Kinship* altarpiece behind the Lady altar (Plate XXXV). The Ranworth *Holy Kinship* is remarkable for its playful depiction of Jesus’ core group of followers as children. Duffy proposes that this group, in conjunction with a fourth panel depicting St Margaret, patron saint of childbirth, suggests that this altar may have been used for the churching of women.<sup>439</sup> The location of Alicia’s memorial suggests a similar relationship with the altarpiece as the Holdiche tomb possessed with the rood screen. It is important to note that she died aged around seventy, unmarried and childless in 1502. Other paintings on the screen have been dated stylistically and by pigment analysis to

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<sup>438</sup> ‘Specification A’, Micklethwaite & Clarke, (1899). Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre. NRO DN/CON 164.

<sup>439</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 180-81.

around 1470, so it is possible that the *Holy Kinship* reredos may have been commissioned by her.

Although the Holy Kinship retablo would have been whitewashed over by the time of Thomas's death, it would have remained in the knowledge base of the parish and in the visual memory of some parishioners. As his age is not recorded, it is possible that he remembered it himself. These images and the ritual cycles of the pre-Reformation parish would not have been forgotten by the time of his death and would have remained alive if hazy in the memories of his peer group and must therefore be considered as potentially significant to the choice of location for Holdiche's monument, who was himself a prominent but unmarried parishioner.

Another aspect of the monument's location to be considered is its relation to his family members who continued to worship at St Helen's. Llewellyn notes examples of the practice whereby monuments were erected near where the deceased sat in church.<sup>440</sup> A surviving hinge let into the upright south parclose post indicates that the area in which Alicia Berney's ledger and Thomas's sepulchre memorial were located was enclosed in a box pew for a high-status local family that was removed during the early twentieth-century restoration. Construction of box pews tended to come later than the period under consideration in this thesis. The disappearance of the male Holdiche lineage at Ranworth before the mid seventeenth-century suggests that the pew may not have been built for that family.

However, leading sixteenth-century families continued to occupy prominent positions within churches. As churchwardens stripped out the partitioning of chantries and nave chapels and removed altars and statues, prominent public space would have been reconfigured and the 'front' of the congregation would have moved up to the edge of the chancel. These newly opened-up areas for the parish elite would sometimes have been screened from congregational gaze by reused parclose or chantry enclosures. It may be that the location of the former Lady chapel had become established as such an area by the Holdiches, sharing the space with departed relatives. Thomas's memorial would have been most prominent among them. Partly shielded from view across the nave by the

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<sup>440</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 42.

south parclose panel, such a household would have a privileged view of the pulpit on the north side whilst their own devotional practices, or lack of them, could be less observed.

The large void beneath the Holy Kinship altarpiece has been sealed with what appears to be fragments of a smashed stone altar (Plate XXXVI). This would have improved the household's immediate environment when attending worship whilst keeping them physically close to a destroyed eucharistic past that some at least would have remembered with affection.

A necessary caveat to this suggestion would be that it cannot be established whether the sealing of the void occurred in the sixteenth century or the altar slab fragments are those mentioned in the restoration architect's instructions and reused in the early twentieth-century prior to the reinstatement of nave altars by Enraght. However, there is a still open void under the *St. John the Baptist* reredos at the north end of the rood screen, but no evidence of a box pew ever having existed there.

The Holdiche family and their associates in life and death.

Llewellyn observes that the subjects of church monuments do not so much 'depart from the world of the living but rather experience a change of status within their social group and lineage.'<sup>441</sup> To gain further understanding of Thomas's monument, it is important to locate his family within the East Anglian gentry *milieu* that he was born into and died among.

The Holdich Family History Society identifies two branches of the family that arose in the Middle Ages without any clear connection between the two. The Northamptonshire branch continues to this day, whereas the Norfolk branch, which rose to prominence in the village of Dudlington but became centred on Ranworth by the mid-fifteenth century, died out in the seventeenth century. The Holdiches could be described as Norfolk residents but their land ownership, legal commissions as Justices of the Peace, business interests and marriages straddled Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire at least. Given

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<sup>441</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 42.

their social standing and range of interests, it would be more accurate to classify them and their associates as belonging to the East Anglian gentry.<sup>442</sup>

In addition to being squires of Ranworth, the Holdiches held large holdings and occupied the kind of county positions that placed them among the major gentry, as identified by the categorisation system used by Peter Bearman in his study of Norfolk's elite between 1540 and 1640.<sup>443</sup> For example, Thomas's father Robert would have been a considerable landowner and served as a Justice of the Peace between 1526 and 1556.<sup>444</sup> He was a royal commissioner in the county and was the third Duke of Norfolk's receiver of land revenues in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Lincolnshire.<sup>445</sup> Robert remained loyal to the Duke throughout the later years of Henry VIII's reign and continued as steward of Howard lands for the Crown under Edward VI, combining two potentially conflicting loyalties. When Thomas Howard was released under Queen Mary, Holdiche continued to serve him in his previous capacity.<sup>446</sup>

As a Howard retainer, Robert Holdiche had benefitted from the dissolution of religious houses in Suffolk. The Holdiches inhabited the Howard patrimony both by association and geographically. Holdiche's closest landowning neighbours were two other retainers, Sir Edmund Windham and Giles Sefowle who became owners of the manor formerly belonging to Beeston Priory at Ranworth.<sup>447</sup> The Holdiches were also connected by marriage to the Southwell, Berney, Paston and Jerningham families, locating them among conservative elements of the Norfolk gentry, who benefitted from the monastic dissolutions but subsequently supported the accession of Queen Mary. This circle was

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<sup>442</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: Politics and Religion in an English County 1500-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), pp. 9-12.

<sup>443</sup> Bearman, *Relations into Rhetorics*, p. 50.

<sup>444</sup> MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors*, pp. 405-07.

<sup>445</sup> MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors*, Appendix II. David M. Head, *The Ebbs and Flows of Fortune: The Life of Thomas Howard, Third Duke of Norfolk* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 1995), pp. 260-61.

<sup>446</sup> Head, *The Ebbs and Flows of Fortune*, pp. 232-33.

<sup>447</sup> Miscellaneous unclassified papers, including copies of letters patent of Henry VIII granting Edmund Windham and Giles Sefowle the site of Beeston Priory, and the manors of Beeston, Runton, Roughton Perers, Ranworth and Sheringham Morley Hall, NRO WKC 7/160, 404X8. Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre.

mainly composed of conservative, Erasmian evangelicals or papists who later became recusants.

The Duke of Norfolk's imprisonment throughout Edward VI's reign created a power vacuum in the county which left their former retainers in disarray. When Kett's rebels were encamped close to Ranworth on Mousehold Heath, Robert Holdiche would no doubt have been on the same side as his neighbour Sir Edmund Windham, the Sheriff of Norfolk who remonstrated with the rebels before fleeing for his life on horseback. The home of Miles Corbett, Thomas's future executor, was ransacked and its dovecot destroyed.<sup>448</sup> It would take some time for the county gentry to become a coherent force in local issues.

Duffy identifies the Holdiches as the dominant family in Ranworth during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although there were other prosperous households in the parish, the Holdiche family 'outclassed them all, and generation after generation left their mark on the church.'<sup>449</sup> Despite the absence of documentary evidence, Duffy asserts that the remarkable rood screen was primarily but not exclusively funded by the Holdiches' lavish benefaction. This is supported by the evidence of the positioning of Holdiche tombs in proximity to the screen.

Social and religious conservatism appears to have continued down the Holdiche line throughout the sixteenth century. Robert's grandson (and Thomas's nephew) John lived to achieve his majority but died without an heir in 1589. John was described by Edmund Scambler, Bishop of Norwich from 1585 to 1594, as being 'backward in religion.'<sup>450</sup> As a convinced Protestant who sought to strengthen the position of puritanical gentry and oust papists from positions of authority, Scambler would have been dismissive of such a position.<sup>451</sup> Scambler's expression does not clearly support Duffy's assertion that John Holdiche was therefore 'no Protestant.' The bishop's comment did not explicitly single

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<sup>448</sup> Stephen K. Land, *Kett's Rebellion: The Norfolk Rising of 1549* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1977), p. 47.

<sup>449</sup> Eamon Duffy, *Notes on St Helen's Church, Ranworth* (unpublished, c.1995), p. 1.

<sup>450</sup> Duffy, *Notes on St Helen's Church*, p. 1.

<sup>451</sup> William Joseph Sheils, 'Scambler, Edmund (c.1520–1594)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004 and online edn, 2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24777>>, [accessed 4 July 2017].

him out as papist, but strongly suggest that he practiced a more traditional faith than Scambler's Calvinist-influenced faith allowed. A better explanation for John Holdiche's backwardness may have been his loyalty to Scambler's predecessor, Edmund Freke, Bishop of Norwich from 1575 to 1584. Freke sought to impose conformity on Norwich diocese in which his predecessor, Bishop Parkhurst, had allowed wide variations of practice to exist. In contrast to Scambler, Freke sought support among the conservative members of the gentry, slowing down the process of reform, to the great frustration of their puritan counterparts. Duffy observes that the heads of the Holdiche household were part of this sometime beleaguered local leadership of Freke and the elderly Catholic Sir Thomas Cornwallis.<sup>452</sup> This would have almost certainly included Thomas, his brothers and nephews.

The presence of a prominent Berney tomb in Ranworth is a reminder of their intermarriage with the Holdiches. This relationship may also have influenced the design of Thomas's monument. It falls chronologically between two larger monuments to the Berney family in St John the Baptist's Church, Reedham (Plate XXXVII). Despite being constructed a century apart, they share stylistic affinities with one another and also with Thomas Holdiche's memorial on a smaller physical scale. The two monuments occupy adjacent spaces in the south aisle. The oldest is a fifteenth-century altar monument topped by an arch with sepulchral resonances (Plate XXXVIII). The upper section comprises a depressed four centred arch 80cm deep surmounted by a deep hood moulding. The monument is topped by a frieze of acanthus leaves, and the spandrels within a hood moulding contain two shields. The back wall of the recess is plastered, with a central rectangular clunch panel inscribed in a narrow rectilinear Gothic script that has been badly eroded. However, the name 'Berney' is still legible. The monument's limestone and plaster gained a rose-coloured patina during a fire in 1969 which gutted the church and may have removed any surviving surface decoration. Beneath the arch is a chest tomb. It is topped with a modern stone ledge that presumably replaces a damaged original.

Although the surviving inscription is only partial and extremely difficult to decipher, John Berney, esquire, who died in 1461, left directions in his will for his burial in

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<sup>452</sup> Duffy, *Notes on St Helen's Church*, p. 1.

Reedham Church. He also established a chantry and left money for a chaplain to pray for his soul and the souls of his parents for four years.<sup>453</sup>

The sepulchre memorial to Henry Berney, Esquire (d. 1584), is immediately adjacent to the west of the fifteenth-century Berney monument (Plate XXXIX). Its arch is lower and more depressed than the earlier monument and is proportionately wider to provide space for the kneeling half-relief figures of Henry, his wife Alice and their progeny. Like the Warde monument, Henry and Alice face one another with five sons and four daughters grouped behind them in a relief frieze (Plate XL). A more classical style is evident in the replacement of shields in the spandrels with roundels, depicting the Berney crest and an HB monogram. The chest tomb is colonnaded, and unlike the fluted pilasters on Thomas Holdiche's portico, freestanding columns support a horizontal cornice which is surmounted by two shields bearing the arms of the Berney, Redham, Caston and Appelton. The chest tomb is topped by a marble ledge, replicating the altar tomb next to it.

The Ranworth ledge is 49cm shorter and the arch 32cm lower, but it is certainly possible to see how the older Berney sepulchre monument may have influenced the dimensions of the Holdiche monument's recess and the four centred arch that frames it. Stylistically it belongs to the era of the Henry Berney monument, predating it by a few years, but perhaps due its more modest scale seems to mediate stylistically between the two. Easter sepulchres were usually located in chancel or on the north side of naves, so placing a sepulchre tomb on the south wall of Ranworth's nave would seem remarkable were it not for the coterminous position occupied by these two Berney monuments in the south aisle in Reedham Church. The absence of a chest tomb from Holdiche's monument may imply his family's lesser status than the Berneys, but is more typical of its period. The art historian Maurice Howard observes that in the post-Reformation period

Funeral monuments [...] took up different, and usually more prominent, positions in the church interior, [...] became something of an eye-catcher within the space, given that the altar is no longer the dominant focus. Moreover, the shift over time from the familiar chest tombs of the later Middle Ages towards the upright wall

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<sup>453</sup> Will of John Berney, esquire, of Reedham (1460), Reg. Stocton, fol. 24, cited by Blomefield in *History of the County of Norfolk*, XI, pp. 121-32.



and free-standing, canopied monuments of later years, allowed for a completely different way into an understanding of the deceased's achievements.<sup>454</sup>

It seems apparent from the comparative evidence of memorials from the Berney, Ward, Houghton and Holdiche families that East Anglian gentry who formed dynastic alliances through marriage and alignment of interests also shared tastes in memorialization. Smaller families appear to have emulated the greater, using similar forms but making economies of scale and materials, reflecting their means and place in local society. Therefore, the design of Holdiche's monument embodies elements of both religious and peer-group conformity, decency in its modest decoration and inscription, and continuity, in outline at least, with a memorial genre of the pre-Reformation Church.

Thomas Holdiche's will.

Apart from his monument, the most substantial evidence for Thomas Holdiche's existence is to be found in his will. Signed and witnessed thirteen days before his death, it offers insight into the land, possessions and income of an unmarried Norfolk gentleman, his family and professional relationships, his faith and his choice of memorialisation through gifts and bequests.

Given the significance that can be discerned from the form, style and location of his monument, it may appear surprising that it was not stipulated in his will. In her survey of 1044 aristocratic wills between 1450 and 1560, Harris noted that 68% of testators had specified their burial space, and 77% of men with surviving widows named them as executors.<sup>455</sup> As a bachelor, Thomas Holdiche relied on his extended family and associates to be executors. His cousin, Miles Corbett, was both executor and a witness to his will. The lack of specific instructions concerning Thomas's burial arrangements suggest that a conversation may have taken place that made mention in the will superfluous. Thomas's choice of Miles Corbett as executor suggests shrewdness on his

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<sup>454</sup> Maurice Howard, 'Art Re-formed: Spiritual Revolution, Spatial Re-location', in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. by Hamling and Williams, pp.267-72, (p. 269).

<sup>455</sup> Harris, 'The Fabric of Piety', 308-55 (p. 313).

part. Corbett was a relative but also an important figure locally. He had inherited the lordships of Ranworth and nearby manors of Woodbastwick and Chamery Hall, South Walsham from his father John, who had been gifted them by Bishop Rugge of Norwich and the Duke of Norfolk following the Duke's release in 1553.<sup>456</sup>

The relatively large number of surviving medieval and early modern East Anglian wills, noted by Badham, enables comparison between his soul bequest and disposal of material goods to family and friends with his stepmother Margaret whose will is dated 1559.<sup>457</sup> Margaret's commendation of her soul is simply stated: 'first I bequeath my soule unto Almighty God my maker and redeemer and my body to be buried in the parish church [...]'<sup>458</sup> The communion of saints has no place in the passage of Margaret Holdiche's soul, as one might expect from a bequest following the Elizabethan Settlement but demonstrates a straightforward formulation that Thomas could also have adopted, had he chosen to do so. In common with Thomas's will, Margaret's instructions do not specify the location of her grave within Ranworth Church, even though burial with her husband in the most prominent place in the nave could not have been a matter of chance. By the time of her death, this position in front of the screen door had recently lost its liturgical purpose. It may have been that Margaret simply wished her remains to rest with her husband's, or possibly she may have also felt an affinity to the Church's former faith. Among her bequests of jewellery, Margaret left her ring of fine gold and silver to a prominent recusant, Sir Thomas Cornwallis and another ring to her niece, Elizabeth Cornwallis.<sup>459</sup>

In the salvific drama of early English Protestant experience, the end of life was a pinnacle moment in manifesting faith, expressed in Protestant treatises and surviving

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<sup>456</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, x, pp. 458-64.

<sup>457</sup> Badham, *Seeking Salvation*, pp. 2-3. Will of Margaret Holdich, widow, of Ranworth 13 June 1559 NCC, Colman, 588, Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre (NRO).

<sup>458</sup> NRO, NCC, Colman, 588.

<sup>459</sup> Anne Weikel, 'Cornwallis, Sir Thomas (1518/9-1604)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004 and online edn, 2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093>>, [accessed 18 May 2019].

Cornwallis was instrumental in suppressing Kett's rebellion in 1549 before becoming a Privy Councillor and courtier to Queen Mary. Stripped of office by Elizabeth I, he retired to his Suffolk estate. After imprisonment following the Northern rebellion, Cornwallis conformed but returned to recusancy in 1578. His connections at court protected him from the more severe consequences of recusancy.

contemporary accounts. Alec Ryrie observes that ‘the early modern Protestant deathbed was a highly structured cultural site [...] the ultimate place of crisis and self-definition.’<sup>460</sup> Thomas’s soul bequest implies strong Protestant beliefs, ‘beseeching God of his divine majesty and infinite mercy so to be received into the fellowship and company of the elect and chosen, there to rest in perfect joy and bliss.’<sup>461</sup> This was by no means a standard formula used in wills during the 1570s and implies either a dictated personal confession of faith, or one provided by the scribe which the testator was willing to sign. It ends with the pious wish that God may consider Thomas among his ‘elect and chosen’ on the Day of Judgement, when most Calvinists believed that their redeemed souls would be united by God with their resurrection bodies.<sup>462</sup> However, the term ‘elect’ to categorised souls chosen by God for salvation was beloved by Calvinists but not exclusively theirs. Catholics and Lutherans of the period also believed in election as a divine mystery, and earlier clauses in Thomas’s soul bequest appear to imply a more traditional understanding of salvation. As a prelude to his judgment and election, he prays that ‘God of his divine majesty and infinite mercy [...] purge and cleanse me from my sins.’<sup>463</sup> The use of ‘purge’ in the present tense indicates a forbidden but continuing belief in Purgatory, a place where Thomas would trust in God’s ongoing mercy to remit him in the absence of overt prayers and masses offered by the living. This potentially contentious expression strongly suggests that behind an apparent conformity lay a conservative or traditional believer.

Thomas was dying as his will was being drafted, and like his contemporaries would have needed to approach his final deathbed battle with the Devil in the same way as his parents did during Mary Tudor’s reign, but with a changed and reduced outward armoury of spiritual aids such as intercession by saints, being anointed with extreme unction, or given crucifixes or prayer beads to hold. Instead, his soul bequest and stresses his unmediated relationship with God. The deathbed remained a place for penitential unburdening but without private confession and absolution. Communion for the sick was still offered to those who qualified by their good standing with the Church, but it had lost

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<sup>460</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, p. 462.

<sup>461</sup> Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre (NRO). Will of Thomas Holdich of Ranworth, proved 28 January 1580, NCC, will register, Flack, 90.

<sup>462</sup> For St Paul’s teaching on the believer’s resurrection body see 1 Corinthians 15.35-58.

<sup>463</sup> NRO, NCC, will register, Flack, 90.

the redemptive power of the pre-Reformation mass and served instead to seal the salvation that already existed.<sup>464</sup>

Within the stripped-down last rites of the Church of England, the considerably reduced role of clerical mediation between the dying sinner and God may have placed more emphasis on the individual's soul bequest after the priestly commendation of the departed at their funeral was excised from the Prayer Book in 1552. It therefore fell to Thomas and all English Protestants to commend their own soul to God prior to their death.

Ryrie describes the deathbed experience as simultaneously individual and formulaic. Among the social aspects of dying, he particularly mentions will making, interpersonal reconciliation, receiving spiritual counsel and deciding whether or not to request communion.<sup>465</sup> Apart from one disparaging reference to his Norwich tailor in which Thomas gave him 30s., 'more than my conscience moveth me to', there is little indication of where he is making peace with others through his will. However, a bequest was made of sixteen rings each costing 13s 4d or more, bearing the motto *amate invicem* ('love each other') to be distributed among his executors and extended family. These were to be worn 'for my sake, and wishing unto them all that is they be linked in alliance, even so to live and continue in mutual love and fellowship.'

These rings may have been a plea for social solidarity and deeper amity among the Ranworth Holdiches and their closest associates. Their circular shape may have symbolised love's eternal nature. The motto may also be a Biblical allusion from John 13.34. Having washed his disciples' feet at the Last Supper, Jesus instructed them in what modern theologians have dubbed his farewell discourse. Jesus gave one final commandment:

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<sup>464</sup> See Second and third exhortations in Communion service (1559), *Book of Common prayer*, ed. by Cummings, pp. 131-33.

<sup>465</sup> Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain*, p. 462.

[...] a new commaundement gyve I unto you, that ye love one together as I have loved you that even do ye love an other. By this shall all men knowe that ye are my disciples yf have love one to another.<sup>466</sup>

In his paraphrase on John 13, Erasmus uses this commandment to differentiate Christ's followers from other men's disciples, distinguished by 'theyr names, apparel, and by the obteyning of certayne ordinaunces of men.'<sup>467</sup> Living by the motto he had bequeathed them, Thomas Holdiche's beneficiaries would have demonstrated not just pragmatic association and familial affection, but also authentic Christian discipleship. The rings would also be a constant visible reminder of his death, in a culture that encouraged the placement of a *memento mori* within sight of Christians' everyday lives.

Thomas bequeathed another ring with a traditional religious connection. He left his sister, Mrs. Hawe, his cramp-ring. Cramp-rings were talismans intended to protect the wearer from epileptic fits and other forms of seizure. They also carried royal favour. Among the healing properties ascribed to the English monarchy, cramp-rings were handled by rulers before being distributed to those in need. The practice arose in the fourteenth-century during the reign of Edward II, when money was offered by the King to the Church at his Good Friday 'creeping to the cross.' This was subsequently redeemed by an equivalent payment, and the Good Friday offering converted into rings that were then rubbed between the monarch's fingers before distribution to sufferers.

The Renaissance historian Carole Levin observes that early Tudor monarchs used ceremonies that required their divinely-bestowed healing powers in touching for the King's Evil (i.e. Scrofula) and cramp rings to demonstrate the legitimacy of their rule. Levin attributes other motivations to Queen Mary, whose traditional piety was manifest in these actions. The gift of cramp rings was also a visible association with her general restoration of 'creeping to the cross' on Good Friday. Her sister Elizabeth discontinued the practice of distributing cramp rings but continued to touch for the King's Evil. Elizabeth did not claim to possess miraculous powers but offered intercessory prayer for

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<sup>466</sup> John 13.34-5, *Paraphrases*, Ranworth copy, John fol. 82<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>467</sup> Ranworth copy, John fol. 82<sup>r</sup>.

sufferers instead.<sup>468</sup> Levin offers no explanation for Elizabeth's ending of the royal practice of rubbing cramp rings. However, the renewed abolition of 'creeping to the cross' and the restored Church of England's aversion to spiritual agency through the medium of material religious culture may offer answers to this issue.

If the cramp-ring in Thomas Holdiche's will was not an heirloom he had inherited, it must have been of Edwardian or Marian origin. Its purpose may offer some light on Thomas's health, and his bequest may indicate something about his sister Hawe's or her family's. Conversely, it may be that he wished to give her a piece of jewellery in addition to seven ells of linen. Whilst these propositions are conjectural, he clearly intended to pass on a precious artefact associated with miraculous powers, rather than order its melting down and re-fashioning as a mourning ring. Despite Elizabeth I's refusal to continue them, cramp rings continued in use through the Elizabethan Settlement and silver cramp rings were still made by Welsh blacksmiths into the nineteenth century.<sup>469</sup>

It is interesting to observe in these bequests of money and distribution of property and gifts how few objects with obvious religious significance are listed in either Margaret's or Thomas's wills, despite the vast range of religious material culture that had passed down through wealthy English gentry only a few decades earlier. Margaret's will, which was drafted on 13 June 1559, two months before the publication of the Royal Injunctions, contains an intriguing bequest of a great 'casollet' of gilt to Ranworth's parish church. The word 'casollet' may have been unfamiliar to Margaret's scribe as well. It may be a phonetic rendering of the Latin *casula*, meaning 'little house.' This word had several additional meanings. It could describe a sleeveless vestment like a cope or chasuble. However, the 'casollet' is described as being 'of gilt', which suggests a more solid, gilded object than a vestment, such as a casket or reliquary. These were often architectural in their design. In either case, neither a cope or reliquary would remain in use for long in an ordinary parish church after the 1559 settlement.

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<sup>468</sup> Carole Levin, '“Would I Give You Help and Succour”: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Touch', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 21, 2 (Summer 1989), 191-205 (pp. 193, 196-69).

<sup>469</sup> Y.M. Jones-Humphrys, 'Literary Notes', *British Medical Journal*, 2, 2704 (26 October 1912), 1150.

The most evidently religious object in Thomas's will is a gold cross. At the time his will was drawn up, it was in the safekeeping of Miles Corbett and was bequeathed to Thomas's goddaughter Frances Holdiche. This was evidently a very valuable gift. Unlike her siblings, Frances did not receive a gift of £20 worth of silver plate, suggesting that the cross was of equivalent or greater value. It is possible that it was a piece of personal jewellery. Elizabethan men of means and fashion wore chains over their doublets, sometimes with the addition of pendants, but I have found no evidence that pectoral crosses would have been worn in Protestant England, even by bishops. There is no mention in Thomas's will of an accompanying chain. Wearing crosses or amulets for protection had been acceptable and even encouraged in the pre-Reformation Church, but were anathema to Protestants. Given these considerations and the cross's apparent value, it is far more likely to have been a larger decorative or devotional object.

It is worth considering the implications of owning such a precious but potentially idolatrous object. The medieval historian Margaret Aston observes that crosses and crucifixes were not specifically mentioned in official injunctions because they were in no sense differentiated from images of the saints and fell under the same condemnation. The presence of churchyard and wayside crosses was a continuing source of anxiety until the Civil War and parliamentary legislation finally dealt with the last survivors. Crosses were also banned from churchyards due to the pre-Reformation habits for prayer for the departed that they still engendered.<sup>470</sup> As late as 1607, Archbishop Matthew of York's Visitation Articles questioned whether parishioners had been praying for the dead 'at crosses or places where crosses have been, in the way to the church, or any other superstitious use of crosses [...] or other memories of idolatry at burials.'<sup>471</sup> Aston comments in relation to this enquiry that 'memory control was one of the iconoclasts' problems.<sup>472</sup> The social historian Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic* makes frequent reference to both crosses and the sign of the cross made as an invisible gesture throughout the sixteenth century. Making the sign of the cross was used by ordinary laypeople to ward off evil and diseases. Although the gesture was only

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<sup>470</sup> Margaret Aston, 'Cross and Crucifix in the English Reformation', *Historische Zeitschrift. Behefte, New Series*, XXXIII, *Macht und Ohnmacht der Bildersturm im Kontext der europäischen Geschichte*, (2002), pp. 265-66.

<sup>471</sup> *Visitation Articles of the Early Stuart Church*, ed. by Kenneth Fincham, 2 vols (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994), I, p. 59.

<sup>472</sup> Aston, 'Cross and Crucifix', p. 266.

authorised on candidates' heads during baptism, some Church of England clergy still surreptitiously sprinkled the sick with holy water and signed the cross over them.<sup>473</sup>

Rather than being buried with the gold cross placed on his breast following pre-Reformation custom, Thomas chose to bequeath it to his goddaughter Frances. As a godfather, Thomas would have been expected to pray for Christ to receive her, like all English children brought for baptism, for Christ 'to lay his handes upon them, to blesse them, to release them of their sinnes, to geve them the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting lyfe.' In her life after baptism, he would have stood surety for Frances, and supported her in forsaking the devil and all his works, believing in God's holy word and keeping his commandments.<sup>474</sup>

In passing on his gold cross to his goddaughter, Thomas may have simply been leaving her a precious keepsake and reminder of his good example. It may also have been possible that having guarded her temporal and spiritual well-being in life, he may have anticipated some kind of reciprocity on her part after his death. Alternatively, or perhaps additionally, Thomas left Frances a protective spiritual object as he was no longer able to pray for her. Thomas's other godchildren, Thomas Dalton and Fardinando Rushmore, were given forty shillings payable on their fourteenth birthdays, a more prosaic and practical gift for boys who do not appear to have been close relatives.

There was one other significant plate bequest to Frances in Holdiche's will:

I will that my said executors cause to be made one white deep basin and ewer of silver of the value of forty marks or thereabouts insigned with the arms of Holdiche, Suthwell and Fincham, which said basin I give unto my said god daughter Frances Holdiche to be delivered her by my executors at the age of eighteen years or upon the day of her marriage which of them shall first happen. And if she die before marriage and before the said age of eighteen years then I

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<sup>473</sup> Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 83.

<sup>474</sup> Excerpt from minister's address to godfathers and godmothers at Baptism (1559), *Book of Common prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 143.



give and bequeath the said basin and ewer unto the right heirs of Ranworth Hall to be and remain unto the said house as an implement forever.

This plate commission that symbolically records the relationship of three gentry families seems significant for two reasons. It commemorates Thomas's parental families, the Holdiches and Finchams, and also incorporates another relationship. The Southwells and Holdiches had intermarried during the previous century, but Thomas may also have been the servant of the same name mentioned in Sir Richard Southwell's will of 1559.<sup>475</sup> The second significant feature is Thomas's attempt to create an heirloom, linked for posterity either through Frances Holdiche's lineage or at Ranworth Hall in the event of the Holdiche family dying out. The generally short-lived existence of items of plate has previously been noted in the Ranworth cup chapter. Nevertheless, this period also saw the beginning of legacy items intended to become heirlooms. Perhaps recent experiences of iconoclasm and damage to monuments created uncertainty about being able to keep a permanent memorial in St Helen's church. In hindsight it can be seen that the Elizabethan Church preserved much of the uncontentious memorials of the past. At the time there was no certainty about the effect of continuing waves of reform that may have challenged the practice of intramural burials, thefts of brass or stone, or time-honoured re-use of memorial spaces. In reality, the heraldic ewer and basin have vanished but the stone monument endures.

The will is also significant in its references to Thomas's family bereavements. The larger bequests are given to the families of his deceased older brothers, to widows and children with provisions for what they would receive if they reached their majority. Deaths of leading family members had occurred during periods of epidemics. Thomas lost his parents within a year during a period of severe influenza. Richard Holdiche's death and Thomas's occurred when plague outbreaks were at their peak locally, in 1563 and 1579 respectively. The reason why Thomas received such a prominent monument may be

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<sup>475</sup> I am grateful to Deborah Taylor, Secretary of the Holdich Family History Society for this suggestion in e-mail correspondence, 30 June 2012. Given this connection, the installation of Sir Richard Southwell's tomb in the recess of an Easter sepulchre in Woodrising church in Norfolk following his death in 1559 may have been emulated in a much smaller way by Thomas Holdiche or his executors.

gratitude. Following the death of his brother Miles, Thomas would have had a crucial role in maintaining his family's position during the minority of his nephew John.

There is not enough clear information in his will to categorise Thomas more closely as an Erasmian, who supported reform in a limited way, or a church papist who concealed inner beliefs and devotions beneath a façade of conformity. Objects mentioned in his will demonstrate that he treasured and possibly used religious artefacts that had no place under the new dispensation, showing continuity with a forbidden past. His personal bequests also showed how he wished to be remembered and how he wished family members to act decently towards one another in the future.

#### Conclusion.

This chapter is an extrapolation from the Thomas Holdiche monument of Llewellyn's dictum that behind every monument can be found a funeral, a death and a life. This progress backwards through his existence has been achieved by working outwards from Thomas Holdich's sepulchre memorial, via his will, to the material culture and matrix of relationships that supported his life. His monument reveals a sense of religious tradition re-presented for changed times and values, demonstrating in various degrees the overarching themes of this thesis; moderation, decency, memory, continuity and conformity.

Dynastic continuity was manifest in Thomas Holdiche's place of burial. It may also be that the continuity he provided for his family through waves of bereavement was rewarded with a more enduring monument than a younger gentry son could normally expect. His will reveals his wish to be remembered by his family and at Ranworth beyond their demise. There are also evident discontinuities. Despite sharing the same built sacred space, his monument was of a different kind to those of his recent forebears, couched in reduced rites and with a transformed relationship with the living. Its shape and location would have given some sense of continuity with the pre-Reformation past, but its classical restraint and brief, stoic inscription would have puzzled his ancestors,

had they beheld it. They would wonder why it affirmed his earthly prestige whilst ignoring his soul's needs.

Thomas's burial rites had been stripped down to a single vernacular and non-sacramental act, devoid of any type of blessing, in contrast to the elaborate and lengthy rituals that would have preceded, accompanied and followed his parents' inhumations. However, as the social historian Christopher Marsh observes, 'it should also be remembered that the late Elizabethans passed through these rites in the same buildings and graveyards as their Henrician ancestors had done. The power of this obvious continuity is not to be dismissed lightly.'<sup>476</sup>

Thomas's monument was not erected near the former Lady altar out of indifference to its previous significance or to disparage its former purpose. It replaced a *piscina* with a sepulchre, superimposing one redundant liturgical facility, an Easter sepulchre, over another, a *piscina*. Thomas Holdiche's sepulchre-shaped memorial was built over twenty years after their liturgical use had been abolished. It shared proportions with earlier sepulchre tomb designs, but its size meant it was never envisaged as performing the same role. By 1579 their liturgical purpose had disappeared and most English people would have concluded it was gone forever. Nevertheless, for those who were old enough, they would have remained places of memory. Holdiche's monument seems rather to have been constructed to resemble past genres and to emulate more distinguished associates' memorialisation. Examples from near neighbours like Edward Ward and higher status associates like the Berneys appear to confirm that they shared conventional tastes in life and death. The principal difference lay in their scale, in accordance with their rank. It is also important to recognize that despite all these factors, the design of Thomas's memorial stands in discontinuity with his forebears.

His memorial embodies a period decency in its lack of artistic presumption or material extravagance. His inscription is circumspect and without ostentation, giving away only the salient features of its subject. This represents his executors' conformity to Elizabethan requirements for monumental epitaphs and imagery, recognizing the new

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<sup>476</sup> Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England: Holding their Peace* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p. 29.

orthodoxy to which they gave public allegiance, as noted elsewhere by Llewellyn.<sup>477</sup> His memorial avoids controversy and lacks the one feature that would have bestowed a more personal identity – his kneeling effigy.

Thomas Holdiche's grant of a burial in church offered a permanent endorsement of his conformity. However, in an age when the Church of England's Supreme Governor, Elizabeth I, prudently avoided enquiry into her subject's inner lives, he would have been judged on outward conformity alone.<sup>478</sup> There is a confessional ambiguity in Thomas Holdiche's legacy which may typify the broad middle of the East Anglian gentry spectrum as they lived through transformations and reversals around the mid-sixteenth century.

By exploring the implications of his will, a largely parallel text to the monument with only limited convergence, it is possible to trace a network of social relationships. Sampling Thomas Holdiche's will and memorial as indicators of changing beliefs about salvation and afterlife within a sixteenth-century rural Norfolk parish may appear to be based on an atypical example. The question may rightly be raised as to how typical a leading member of a gentry family would have been. Less than 2% of England's population were gentry, but in Norfolk the gentry proportion of the population was considerably higher than other counties, and the number of gentry families identified by Bearman rose by one hundred by the beginning of the Civil War from three hundred and fifty a century earlier.<sup>479</sup> They were a prominent and growing part of many parishes. Their presence would have influenced the outward behaviour and words of ministers and lesser parishioners.

Based on the limited evidence of his monument and will, it is possible to re-create Thomas Holdiche's character and beliefs, even if only in outline. He appears, in death as in life, surrounded by his family and their conservative East Anglian gentry associates. Nevertheless, his will suggests some inner paradoxes. However, the balance of evidence

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<sup>477</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 42.

<sup>478</sup> See Marsh, *Popular Religion*, p. 187, for exclusion of non-conformists from Christian burial.

<sup>479</sup> Bearman, *Relations into Rhetorics*, p. 50.

in his will and monument give the appearance of an unresolved Protestant rather than a crypto-Catholic.

Perhaps the most important question is not so much who Thomas Holdiche was or what exactly he believed, but why he was given a memorial. Paradoxically, the answer may be that this childless bachelor's importance was connected with dynastic continuity. He never became squire of Ranworth, but between the death of his brother Miles and his nephew John achieving his majority, Thomas would have been the most senior male figure in the Holdiche family, overseeing its interests and maintaining its position among their gentry associates. Although his burial was entrusted to executors, his memorial was introduced at an unknown date and most likely reflects his own wishes enacted through familial gratitude. Llewellyn observes that 'monuments [...] help the bereaved to confirm the finality of physical death (the natural body) by sustaining the social presence of the subject as a political body.'<sup>480</sup> Like their inscribed mourning rings, his monument's presence close by their place in church would have simultaneously reminded the Holdiche household of their loss, his precepts and beliefs. The provision in his bequest of a basin and ewer bearing the arms of Holdiche, Fincham and Southwell to remain in Ranworth Hall in perpetuity reveal that he did not take continuity in church and dynasty for granted. However, like the Ranworth Holdiches, the commissioned plate and Ranworth Hall have all disappeared, but his memory is perpetuated by his monument in St Helen's.

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<sup>480</sup> Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, p. 42.

## Chapter four.

The Ranworth parish register and changing patterns in parish life and worship in the period following the Elizabethan Settlement until 1604.

### Introduction.

The final artefact from Ranworth's sixteenth-century material culture to be considered in this thesis is the Ranworth parish register (Plate XLI).<sup>481</sup> The present form of the register owes its existence to the Constitution '*De Registriis in Ecclesiis salvae custodiæ committendis*' made by convocation of the Province of Canterbury on 25 October 1597. This required parishes to provide, at their own expense, parchment books to contain transcripts from ancient paper books (*ex veteribus libris cartaceis*) the names of those who had been baptised, married or buried during Elizabeth I's reign.

The intention was to secure for posterity the memory of these records, to which future names would be added. Fees would be payable by them for this purpose.<sup>482</sup> In common with many others, Ranworth's parchment register was a transcript of a previous, probably paper version. Its registered entries begin on the feast of St John the Baptist (June 24) 1559, but consistent palaeography throughout the sixteenth century provides evidence that this would have been a transcript made at the end of the century, probably in 1597. It was an officially-instigated material object, another visible mark of conformity that became a repository of local identity and as later inscriptions attest, came to be cherished beyond its original purpose.

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<sup>481</sup> Ranworth Parish Register 1559-1766. Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre (NRO). NRO PD 243/1.

<sup>482</sup> '*De Registriis in Ecclesiis salvae custodiæ committendis*' (25 October 1597), cited by John Southerden Burn, *Registrum Ecclesiae Parochialis: The history of parish registers in England, also of the registers of Scotland, Ireland, the East and West Indies, the Dissenters, and the Episcopal Chapels in and about London. With Observations on Bishops' Transcripts, and the provisions of the Act of the 52<sup>nd</sup> George III. Cap. 146* (London: Smith, 1862), pp. 22-23.

Historical writing about parish registers from holistic perspectives has been relatively sparse, despite abundant use of their contents. Scholarly research has often treated registers as a means to an end, usually connected with population studies or sources of antiquarian curiosities. Name, date and location evidence extracted from parish registers populates a plethora of genealogical websites. For many years academic researchers have drawn on parish registers as prime source material for biographical or statistical data. Early modern English demographic and epidemiological studies rely heavily upon them in the absence of other nationally consistent records. Despite their recognised shortcomings and inconsistencies, they remain the best general source of evidence for early modern ordinary peoples' lives in England.<sup>483</sup> Beyond data-stripping, little attention has been given to registers as artefacts in their own right.

Parish registers' value in establishing pedigrees and linking people to historic events had already been recognised by the eighteenth-century Somerset Herald, Ralph Bigland.<sup>484</sup> In the following century the solicitor and antiquary J. Southerden Burn drew attention to a wealth of information that could also be gleaned from parish registers. His research was driven by a sense of urgency in protecting and transcribing them, as 'the most ancient Registers are yearly disappearing or becoming illegible for want of proper care and preservation.'<sup>485</sup> By the time Burn's second edition was published, a clergyman and local historian, John Charles Cox began collecting extracts from registers which he would publish in his 1910 *The Parish Registers of England*.<sup>486</sup> Cox was a left-wing Liberal who pioneered the concept of 'history from below', researching the functions of what he described as the early modern 'parish state', in which even labourers theoretically had a voice in vestry meetings.<sup>487</sup> Cox's *Parish Registers* retains its authoritative position to

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<sup>483</sup> See Roger Finlay's defence of general reliability of pre-Commonwealth registers in 'The Accuracy of the London Parish Registers, 1580-1653', *Population Studies*, 32, 1 (March 1978), 95-112.

<sup>484</sup> Ralph Bigland, *Observations on marriages, baptisms, and burials, as preserved in parochial registers. With sundry specimens of the entries of marriages, baptisms & c. in foreign countries: interspersed with divers remarks concerning proper methods necessary to remembrance of the several branches of families & c.* (London: Richardson & Clarke, 1764).

<sup>485</sup> Burn, 'Preface to the Second Edition', *Registrum Ecclesiae Parochialis*.

<sup>486</sup> J. Charles Cox, *The Parish Registers of England* (Totowa: E.P., 1974), p. vii.

<sup>487</sup> Elizabeth T. Hurren, 'A Radical Historian's Pursuit of Rural History: The Political Career and Contribution of Reverend Dr John Charles Cox, c.1844 to 1919', *Rural History*, 19, 1 (2008), 81-103 (pp. 97, 92).

the present day. One other elderly yet definitive source should be mentioned, W.E. Tate's *The Parish Chest*.<sup>488</sup> Tate, a historian of rural life, considers the breadth of parochial administrative records that would have been housed in their chests, and indeed the chests themselves.

More recently, through the growth of material culture studies, registers have become biographical sources for object's owners.<sup>489</sup> However, their status as artefacts themselves and repositories of other kinds of significance are beginning to be addressed. The early modern English literature scholar Andrew Gordon astutely observes that 'their material existence as objects, the products of specific acts of writing, of particular practices and the focus of various kinds of use, has tended to be obscured.'<sup>490</sup> Gordon's research has investigated ways in which registers were kept and their records used as a means of shaping parish memory. Even more imaginatively, the musicologists Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson list parish registers among the written materials of the pre-phonographic age that 'bear witness to there having been sound, and encourage us to listen out to the now faint echoes of fleeting, intangible, aural worlds of the past.' The sounds of church bells and public worship are among the sounds that Biddle and Gibson mention, and parish registers provide the only general records of this important part of the early modern English soundscape.<sup>491</sup> Parish registers are evidently more than the sum total of their official contents.

Registers are objects that can be interrogated from a wide range of perspectives. The first perspective on the Ranworth register to be investigated is concerned with its origins and purpose as laid out in official injunctions. Although their instigation by Thomas Cromwell in 1538 appears to have been a purely administrative programme, registers would have been added to church inventories at a similar time to the introduction of the

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<sup>488</sup> W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest: A study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969).

<sup>489</sup> Karen Harvey, 'Craftsmen in Common', *Gender and Material Culture*, ed. by Grieg and others, pp. 68-89, (p. 70).

<sup>490</sup> 'The Paper Parish: The parish register and the reformation of parish memory in early modern London', Andrew Gordon, *Memory Studies*, 11, 1 (2018), 51-68 (p. 52).

<sup>491</sup> Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson, eds., *Cultural Histories of Noise, Sound and Listening in Europe, 1300-1918* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 1.



Great Bible. Their preservation as transcripts coincides with Poor Law reform at the end of the century.

Having considered its inception, attention will be given to the register as a physical object and its immediate parochial setting within the parish chest. The register's examination, description and analysis will consider its characteristics derived from official injunction, authorship of its transcription and the range of flyleaf inscriptions that will feature in subsequent sections of this chapter. In common with the other artefacts studied in this thesis, there is a considerable amount of surviving physical context to aid reconstruction of the register's use.

The third perspective will move inside the register to consider patterns of marriage. The limited information of the Ranworth register's wedding entries nonetheless yields insights into couples' origins and status, maintenance of customary periods for weddings, preferences for traditional dates and transgressions of custom. This information suggests how choice of marriage dates may reveal changing practices as memories of the pre-Reformation Church faded.

The varied forms of conformist practices connected with the register will be the subject of the fourth perspective. Beyond the obvious need to record parishioners' services, a range of other uses will be considered, including the legally required co-operation between clergy and churchwardens. Registers were potentially protective for their keepers, in the sense that they provided concrete proof of conformity to the administrative demands of the Tudor state and of pastoral activity for the benefit of enquiring archdeacons. The 1597 register injunction will be considered in parallel with other requirements placed upon churchwardens around this time. This reveals a perhaps surprising but nonetheless practical link to Poor Law reform.

The final perspective will explore the spiritual implications of register entries and to what extent the book as a whole embodies an inherent 'decency.' Linguistic exploration of the word 'decent' and its period meanings will build on theological and aesthetic arguments proposed in connection with the Ranworth communion cup. Late Elizabethan registers appear belatedly to fulfil another aspect of Archbishop Parker's programme for the

Church of England and I will argue that they embody a similar ‘decency’ to the cup, albeit with different materials and function.

In conclusion I will evaluate the results of this examination, whilst recognizing the register’s limitations as a single source of evidence of life and worship in Ranworth. As a record of Elizabethan Church life, it attests to considerable continuity but also significant changes. This is an important caveat, as omitting pre-1559 entries from the Ranworth transcript would have contributed to a loss of parish ‘memory’ before the Elizabethan settlement. Paradoxically, the transcripts intended to preserve the memory of names and events for posterity also contributed to the excision from history of parishioners’ entries from previous, less theologically certain times. Like the removal of the material culture from the old religion from parishes churches, the past population were also consigned to ‘another country, another world.’<sup>492</sup>

The legal and ecclesiastical origins of the Ranworth register.

Although sixteenth-century parish registers were innovative in their prescribed form, the practice of recording similar information concerning baptisms, marriages and burials was derived from a number of pre-Reformation sources. Records of services can be found incidentally, as expenses recorded in surviving pre-Reformation churchwardens’ accounts.<sup>493</sup> More directly, some pre-Reformation parochial clergy and monastic houses added marginal inscriptions to liturgical books and calendars, relating to weddings and obits of patrons and donors. In greater churches and religious houses, books of donors or obituaries were maintained until the Reformation.<sup>494</sup> As a local example, the calendar of the Ranworth Antiphoner contains the obits of some of the leading figures of the parish, particularly connected with the Holdiche family circle. Both husbands of Elizabeth Felmingham, formerly Holdiche, and other relations appear alongside their date of

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<sup>492</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 585, 593.

<sup>493</sup> Gordon, ‘The Paper Parish’, p. 53.

<sup>494</sup> Tate, *The Parish Chest*, p. 43. See Charlotte A. Stanford, *Commemorating the Dead in Late Medieval Strasbourg: The Cathedral’s Book of Donors and its Use (1320-1521)* (London: Routledge, 2011), for a detailed analysis of Strasbourg Cathedral’s obituary, its memorial opportunities and place within the cathedral’s construction strategy.

death.<sup>495</sup> The Ranworth Antiphoner is a rare survival of a common liturgical book that largely perished on iconoclastic bonfires from 1548 onwards or became bookbinders' scrap. By that time, a new and universal form of liturgical record had already been in use for a decade in many parishes.

The record-keeping demanded by Thomas Cromwell's Injunction of 1538 went beyond social privilege to require the registration of all parochial christenings, marriages and burials:

That you and every parson vicare or curate within this diocese shall for every church kepe one boke or registere wherein ye shall write the day and yere of every weddyng christening and buryeng made within yor parishe for your tyme, and so every man succeeding you likewise. [...] And for the sauff kepinge of the same boke the parish shalbe bonde to provide of these comen charges one sure coffer with twoo lockes and keys whereof the one to remayne with you, and the other with the said wardens, wherein the saide boke shalbe laid up. Whiche boke ye shall take further and in the presence of the said wardens or one of them write and recorde in the same all the weddinges christenynges and buryenges made the whole weke before. And that done to lay upp the boke in the said coffer as afore.<sup>496</sup>

Failure to carry out this injunction carried a fine of 3s 4d per missing entry, to be paid towards church repairs. Cromwell issued this regulation in his unique role as Henry VIII's Vice-Gerent of the Church of England. It appears to have arisen from a broadly reformist agenda but not an obviously evangelical one. Parochial registration was a Catholic as well as evangelical aim in Europe and would be maintained in England during subsequent reigns, regardless of their theological orientation. In 1497 Cardinal Ximenez had ordered the keeping of registers in his archdiocese of Toledo. According to his eighteenth-century biographer Jacques Marsollier, Ximenez sought to root out informal divorce and remarriages and consequent issues of their children's legitimacy. He was particularly concerned about the incidence of 'spiritual incest'. In medieval

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<sup>495</sup> Ranworth, St Helen's Church. *Antiphonarium ad usum Sarum* MS (Norwich? c. 1460).

<sup>496</sup> State papers, 30 Henry VIII 5 September 1538, cited by Cox, pp. 2-3.

Catholicism, godparents were added to the prohibited list of kindred and affinity that prevented close relatives from marrying.<sup>497</sup> General parochial registration became an aim of the Catholic Reformation. Closer to home and a decade before Cromwell's injunction in England, Francis I had established uniform registration practices in the French Church. This moderate reform, expressing effective monarchical power, took place within the Catholic fold. Despite negative connotations in both books of the Bible to census taking, there is no evidence that reformed preachers drew unfavourable comparisons with parochial registration.<sup>498</sup>

Rather than reflecting Cromwell's evangelical agenda, it appears that his general registration initiative fits into the constitutional historian Geoffrey Elton's classical view that

the history of the Church under the Tudors is at heart straightforward: it was turned into an adjunct of the state, removed from the spiritual and jurisdictional supremacy of the pope, and subjected to a similar dominion exercised by the Crown. These were the constitutional aspects of the English Reformation.<sup>499</sup>

MacCulloch identifies a number of areas of Tudor administration that emulated institutions of their Valois rivals, such as Great Councils and Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber.<sup>500</sup> It is therefore possible that French parish registers may also have offered an example for English legislators to copy. However, it is interesting to note that this injunction was published at the same time that Great Bibles were ordered to be purchased and set in the midst of every church, the Bible placed on its lectern and the register secured in its chest.

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<sup>497</sup> Jacques Marsollier, *Histoire du Ministère du Cardinal Ximenes*, 2 vols, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Paris: Dupuis, 1739), I, bk. 2, p. 263. Burn, *Registrum Ecclesiae Parochialis*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>498</sup> In the Old Testament, census taking provoked God's wrath on most occasions. It required financial atonement (Exodus 30.11-16) and caused an outbreak of plague in Israel (2 Samuel 24). In the New Testament, Jesus was born in Bethlehem because of an imperial census (Luke 2.1-7) and another triggered a Jewish revolt (Acts 5.37).

<sup>499</sup> *The Tudor Constitution: documents and commentary* ed. by G.R. Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1960), p. 318.

<sup>500</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, (e-mail correspondence, 14 March 2018).

Furthermore, MacCulloch suggests in his biography of Thomas Cromwell that instituting registers of marriages and baptisms may have also reflected Cromwell's and Cranmer's abiding fear of Anabaptism after 1535. Keeping registers would have offered a means of local observation on those who did not baptise their infants.<sup>501</sup>

Elton described the registers' introduction as almost certainly providing 'a statistical basis for government action.'<sup>502</sup> This view was also shared by some of Henry VIII's apprehensive subjects. Cox cites returns from Cromwell's agents in 1539 revealing a mistrust of the new registers as a potential source of information for taxation purposes. This measure came three years after the creation of the Court of Augmentations that dealt with the valuation and sale of monastic property and land. Henry VIII's subjects may have wondered where the new fiscal relationship between Church and State was heading. William Hole, a smith of Horsham, was alleged to have said that for each recorded wedding, christening or burial a sum of 5d would need to be paid to the king 'and to the lorde of the franchises as moch.'<sup>503</sup> Lord of the franchise was coterminous with lord of the manor, indicating that Hole's rumour meant that registration would benefit both the Exchequer and local authority in the form of the gentry.

Cromwell's registration was maintained under Edward VI. The only change in its enforcing injunctions was that fines for omissions were payable to the poor of the parish, rather than its church. Registration was enforced by further articles during the restoration of Catholicism during Mary I's reign. In 1555 Cardinal Pole directed his bishops to enquire about parish registration and in further articles to the clergy in 1557 repeated the question of whether they inscribed godparents' names in baptism entries.<sup>504</sup> In the theological turmoil of Edward's reign this practice had been variable in many places, but Pole's articles demonstrate that spiritual incest was re-established as a crime for English

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<sup>501</sup> Biography of Thomas Cromwell, to be published in September 2018. I am indebted to Prof. MacCulloch for providing this material.

<sup>502</sup> *England 1200-1600: The Sources of History: Studies in the use of Historical Evidence* ed. by G.R. Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1976), p. 111.

<sup>503</sup> Domestic State papers, Henry VIII 5, 14, pt.1, nos. 295, 507, 815, cited by Cox, *Parish Registers*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>504</sup> Cox, *Parish Registers*, pp. 4-5.

Christians. This ended with the Elizabethan settlement and reference to godparents disappeared from most registers, or certainly from their transcripts.

After six decades of continual use, the original paper registers would have been in danger of shedding their contents. Most of the original registers, including Ranworth's, also disappeared around the turn of the seventeenth century, following their transcription onto parchment required by the 1597 Constitution. The Constitution was restated in the revised Canons of the Church of England, promulgated in 1603 and published in 1604. Canon Seventy required one parchment book to be kept by each parish, recording the day and year of every christening, wedding and burial, 'since the time that the law was first made in that behalf, but specially since the beginning of the reign of the late Queen.'<sup>505</sup> In 1597 the transcription of paper registers onto parchment no doubt extended the life of these records, but evidence from other surviving early registers suggests that any original detail that the Ranworth register would have contained beyond the bare record of names and dates would not have been transferred to the new register. The 1604 Canons stipulated that the registers needed to be added to immediately after morning or evening prayer on Sundays in the presence of both churchwardens.

In addition, Canon Seventy required that an annual return containing all recorded entries for the year be submitted to the diocesan registry within a month of Lady Day, March 25. These returns, now archived as archdeacon's transcripts in the Norfolk Record Office and elsewhere, fulfilled Archbishop Matthew Parker's earlier aspiration. Parker supported the introduction of a bill to the Commons on 9 March 1563, intended to create centralised diocesan registries, where recorded entries from 1538 onwards would be transcribed into 'greate decent books of parchment.' The costs would have been defrayed by fees for new register entries, paid by those whose households having lands with an annual value of 40s or goods worth £5. However, this proposal was opposed by parochial clergy and rejected by MPs.<sup>506</sup> It is worth noting the bill's phraseology. Only a few years separate this bill that attempted to record the Church of England's rites of passage in 'greate decent books of parchment' from the beginning of Parker's programme to replace

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<sup>505</sup> Canon Seventy, *Constitutions and Canons, 1603*.

<sup>506</sup> Burn, *Registrum Ecclesiae Parochialis*, pp. 20-21.

chalices with ‘decent’ communion cups. This required quality of decency will be explored further in this chapter.

The material register in its physical location.

The Ranworth parish register is a slim, leather-bound volume measuring H 32.8cm by W 15.1cm by D 2.9cm. With the exception of later flyleaves, its pages are parchment, covered by a brown leather and pasteboard binding. Both the binding and leaves show considerable wear, and two parchment leaves, probably blank, have been cut out at the end of the register. The leaves are not numbered. There is a single surviving paper flyleaf, with an inscription stating that ‘This book was new bond by John Garwood Churchwarden Anno 1729. *Soli Deo Gloria In Sæcula Sæculorum*’, (Glory to God alone through endless ages). For a book containing little more than a list of names, dates and events, the reflective nature of some of its flyleaf inscriptions is striking. Although these mainly date from the seventeenth century onwards, they attest to a remarkable sense of the community’s past alongside more universal musings on mortality and salvation. More will be said about these inscriptions later in this section.

Unlike some surviving earlier registers, the Ranworth register was subdivided into separate sections for christenings, weddings and burials. The opening title describes it as the register book for Ranworth and Pankford (now called Panxworth). The rectory of Panxworth, a small village a mile to the south of Ranworth had been absorbed into the benefice of Ranworth at the institution of William Moore as Vicar in 1528. It was served in the 1540s and 1550s by assistant clergy with the title *Capellanus* or chaplain under the patronage of the Holdiche family. From then onwards it was mostly served by the Vicar of Ranworth until the church was apparently abandoned in the seventeenth century.<sup>507</sup> Despite this unification, a sense of local identity persisted and Ranworth register entries still differentiated between Ranworth and Panxworth parishioners until 1800.

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<sup>507</sup> ‘Ranworth with Panxworth’, Clergy of the Church of England Database, <<http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/locations/index.jsp?locKey=19888>>, [last accessed 17 March 2018].

The primary evidence for dating the Ranworth register transcript around 1597 is the uniformity of handwriting and form of words. Like most period transcripts, only essential information as required by injunction was recorded and any extraneous references that might have existed in its paper predecessor would have been ignored. Outside larger and urban parishes, which would have retained the services of a parish clerk after the Reformation or employed professional scribes, most of the transcripts made around the turn of the seventeenth century would have been made by the clergy.<sup>508</sup> Entries were added in the same hand well into the seventeenth century, which would imply that the transcription was the work of Thomas Wright, Vicar of Ranworth from 1585 to 1627. Each year's entries were placed between horizontal lines and inscribed by both *anno domini* and regnal year dates. Years with no entries were simply marked as 'none.' Every completed folio was attested by Wright and countersigned by the churchwardens. All baptismal entries prior to 1593 bore the marks of Richard Ederich and Edward Stamfordby (Plate XLII). The following leaf, covering the period from 1594 to 1614, bears the marks of Samson Michells and Robert Fryatt. Ederich and Stamfordby's countersigning marks continue in the marriage section until 1597. It is noteworthy that none of the wardens were able to write their own signature. Although they may have possessed some reading ability, it may equally be the case that the inscriptions they witnessed may have been taken on trust.

Ranworth's recorded entries began at the feast of John the Baptist, 24 June 1559, the date that the Act of Uniformity came into force, rather than the date of Queen Elizabeth's accession in the previous year. It would be difficult to attribute great significance to this subtle distinction between accession and injunction, but it is interesting to note that there are fifty-three deposited original registers in the Norfolk Record Office commencing from 1558, compared with twenty-eight from the following year. This may appear to suggest that a smaller number of incumbents chose to begin their parish record from the date of the Church of England's re-establishment as a Protestant entity. Conversely, there are a surprising number of Norfolk registers that begin during the previous reign and especially from 1557, the year of Cardinal Pole's last enquiry. Therefore, it may be that the later transcribers used a number of starting points provided by mid sixteenth-century officialdom. Whether their individual choice reflected something of their sense of parish

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<sup>508</sup> Cox, *Parish Registers*, p. 18.



history would be impossible to say unless corroborated by other sources. Certainly, the Ranworth register's date of commencement excluded the burial of Ranworth's two most important residents who died that year, Robert and Margaret Holdiche. Margaret's will is dated 13 June 1559, so her burial could only have taken place a few days before the feast of St John the Baptist.

Although they mostly come from a later period, the register inspired some mainly eighteenth-century inscriptions. Unlike the register's vernacular entries, these were mainly in Latin, and are included in Appendix II. These often maudlin but hopeful reflections seem a far cry from the administrative tome that Cromwell had envisaged in his 1538 injunction. In juxtaposition with its intended legal purposes, the evidence of flyleaf inscriptions reveals that Ranworth's register became an object for contemplation, a link with the past through continuing use that made it seem to be a 'living' artefact. A handwritten flyleaf inscription, probably by William McKay, Vicar of Ranworth from 1723-52 states that

This Register had its First Birth anno 1559

and now Anno 1733

Its 174 Years old

*Tempus Edax Rerum* (Time devours all)

This eighteenth-century view reveals the register as a *memento mori* but also living witness to an otherwise vanished population. Like communion cups, registers' survival may be attributed to legal requirement and their continuing utility, but also a growing sense of communal attachment. The Ranworth register also preserved the names of incumbents for posterity. 'Thomas Wright Vicar' is inscribed on a flyleaf, and beneath are the names of successive vicars written in different hands. Before the advent of the list of incumbents' boards found in most parish churches today, registers provided the only local trace of their ministry, unless they died in office and were memorialised by family members or grateful parishioners.

As well as being an administrative development, parish registers were also required by injunction to be permanently housed within church buildings. Thomas Cromwell's 1538 injunction required that the newly-purchased parish registers should be kept in strong coffers with two locks. Ranworth possessed such a chest, or possibly several. Tate observes that parish churches generally contained one or more for each guild, frequently referred to as an 'ark, coffer, or hutch'.<sup>509</sup> Pre-Reformation coffers or chests formed an important part of the secure storage in churches, along with aumbries and banner-stave lockers.<sup>510</sup> Only greater churches could boast a purpose-built sacristy, and for most parishes, books, plate, vestments and other precious liturgical objects needed safe housing in various locations within church buildings, parsonages and churchwardens' houses. Situated in the nave, chests contained a range of different parochial treasures, including money and important documents. Chests sometimes served as additional seating for acolytes during services, and the Ranworth chest would have offered a perch of similar height to a misericord.

The widespread existence of parish chests made them an obvious repository for the new registers required by Cromwell in 1538. The parish chests were required to possess two locks, with one key held by the incumbent and the other by a churchwarden. This was strengthened by the addition of a third lock and key to be kept by the other warden in the 1603 canons. The now vanished triple locks of the Ranworth chest were still attached in 1709, according to that year's parish inventory.<sup>511</sup>

The Ranworth register was physically connected to St. Helen's through the parish chest which is of typical fifteenth-century construction. Three guilds are referred to in pre-Reformation wills at Ranworth, and it is feasible that the chest in St. Helen's nave may have belonged to one of them. As a pre-Reformation object retained for continuing

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<sup>509</sup> Tate, *The Parish Chest*, p. 36.

<sup>510</sup> Aumbries were cupboards recessed into church walls containing church plate, books and sometimes reliquaries, see C. Pocknee and D.W. Randall, 'Aumbry', in *A New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. by J.G. Davies (London: SCM, 1986), pp. 54-55. Banner stave lockers were tall, narrow cupboards or recesses that held processional crosses and the poles used for banners in processions.

<sup>511</sup> Morant and L'Estrange, 'Notices of the Church at Randworth, Walsham Hundred', 178-211 (p. 209).

service, the chest does not belong to the cluster of bespoke artefacts that form the principal focus of this thesis. However, it is an overarching artefact that potentially housed both the register and new communion plate.

The Ranworth parish chest or coffer is of simple and functional construction. It is constructed out of oak using large panels devoid of any decoration or bevelling, with a flat top with an internal wooden hinge (Plate XLIII). Its overall dimensions are H 66.0cm by W 149.8cm by D 61.3cm. Apart from a lock of approximately eighteenth-century date, a short length of chain on the back that may have linked to the lid and three iron bands nailed to the top, it is constructed entirely using wooden pegs. These features indicate that it is of medieval origin, possibly contemporary with St Helen's nave, rebuilt in 1453. The chest's dimensions indicate that it would have provided sufficient space to store the register and other important documents such as the church's terrier and inventory, and still have space for the sparse accoutrements of the Lord's Supper; the table carpet and fair linen cloth, the minister's surplice and tippet, the cup, paten and flagon.<sup>512</sup>

The chest is a utilitarian object that nevertheless represents continuity with the pre-Reformation past, protecting the parish's treasures and written records. Some of its contents would have been removed in response to new injunctions and visitations, but others, including the register, would have been added. The chest's continuing presence in Ranworth's nave adds a specific contextual perspective to the register. This is particularly helpful, given that it is the only artefact under consideration in this thesis no longer lodged in its original setting.

The register and parish chest are tangible reminders of the more durable aspects of the churchwardens' role in an era of bewildering change and reversion. The role of churchwardens in the acquisition of communion cups, *Paraphrases* and other required books has been mentioned previously, but it is in their shared stewardship of the registers that they are manifested in the new material culture of the Church of England.

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<sup>512</sup> During the twentieth century and early years of this century, the chest was used as a work top for church flower arrangers. Once there was awareness that the chest was becoming waterlogged, it was emptied and a cope that had belonged to Revd. E. Everard, Vicar of Ranworth 1926-72, was discovered in the bottom. This item gives an appropriately liturgical example of the chest's capacity.

Churchwardens were keyholders to the chest and witnesses to the register's entries. It is possible to visualise the weekly convergence of Ranworth's vicar and wardens to unlock the chest, inspect and amend the register, the wardens' countersigning or marking of each completed folio, as a kind of solemn ritual that involved mutual recognition of their office and shared legal responsibilities.

Early modern churchwardens were often caricatured as lesser social figures than some of their pre-Reformation antecedents. The churchwardens who attested each leaf of the parchment transcript of Ranworth's register were unable to write their names, and as mentioned previously, left their marks instead. This strongly implies that the office of churchwarden at Ranworth was not attractive to wealthier and more educated parishioners. The early modern historian Beat Kümin observes that 'the English example suggests that the reality of the reformed Church brought disruption and interference rather than increased local autonomy.'<sup>513</sup>

Tudor reforms meant that churchwardens were called upon to shoulder greater responsibilities without adding the sort of powers that made office-holding attractive in early modern society. In the case of smaller parishes that did not possess extensive assets, it would have been possible for the local elite to exercise vicarious control over churchwardens who were their social inferiors and could also have been their tenants. However, churchwardens' financial liabilities meant that they needed some personal means, if not an education. Kümin's research reveals that sixteenth-century churchwardens came from a wide social spectrum, but were generally drawn from the middle ranks of society, including larger tenants.<sup>514</sup> Like incumbents, churchwardens' names and approximate periods of office have been preserved by the registers, forming a virtuous trinity of compliance.

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<sup>513</sup> Beat A. Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c. 1400-1560* (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996), p. 263.

<sup>514</sup> Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community*, pp. 31-39. East Anglian wardens in the 1570s possessed a modest average of £6 in goods, according to lay subsidy assessments.

A liturgical and social examination of the Ranworth register's marriage entries.

The third perspective considers what can be learned from the register's recorded information from a fresh angle that may shed light marriage in Elizabethan Ranworth. Whilst scholarly research into early modern parish registers tends to focus on demographics, epidemiology and the significance of names, little attention has been given to whether the reformed Church of England calendar influenced when liturgical life events and celebrations were planned. This analysis has been restricted to weddings, as such considerations would have been largely irrelevant to the burial of the dead and baptism sections of the Ranworth register. For obvious reasons, funerals were planned at short notice. Similarly, baptisms would have been hastened by parental anxieties about original sin perhaps almost as much as they would have been before the Reformation. Although the Church of England's sacramental theology as expressed in its Articles of Religion redefined baptism as a mark of membership of the Church that simply confirmed rather than transformed its recipient's eternal destiny, Article Nine re-affirmed St Augustine's teaching on original sin that had brought baptism as close to birth as reasonably possible.<sup>515</sup> However, P.M. Kitson, Associate of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, discovered that by the 1590s over half of baptisms were taking place on Sundays for the first time since registration began in the twenty-six sample parishes investigated by the Group.<sup>516</sup> Therefore it may be assumed that baptisms were not planned as far ahead as weddings in normal circumstances. I will consider whether register entries correlate with significant dates in the liturgical calendar or reveal 'prohibited' seasons or appear to have been governed by mainly social conventions.

Analysis of the marriage section of Ranworth's register entries has been undertaken from the register's beginning in 1559 until 1604. This final date has been chosen as the year in which the 1603 Canons were published and more locally, the register contains the marriage last entry for a male member of the Ranworth Holdiche family, Thomas Holdiche, who married Grysell Ellyott on June 3 that year. The entries are sparse and

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<sup>515</sup> See Articles Nine, Twenty-Five & Twenty-Seven in 'Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion' (1571), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, pp. 676, 680-81.

<sup>516</sup> P.M. Kitson, 'Religious change and the timing of baptism in England, 1538-1705', *Historical Journal*, 52, 2 (2009), 269-94 (p. 280).

formulaic, giving the couple's names, occasionally mentioning their status or parish of residence, without specifying whether minors were being married, whether banns were called or licences issued.

This research has been conducted from a number of perspectives. First, the overview provided by yearly figures was considered, to see where gaps or clusters occur. Secondly, to look at which months were most favoured to see whether weddings fell into approximate 'seasons.' Thirdly, days of the week were recorded to observe if any were particularly favoured. Fourthly, the dates have been cross-referenced with the calendar in the Book of Common Prayer and also the Sarum rite Norwich Diocesan calendar as it appears in the Ranworth Antiphoner. The purpose of this was to see if any saints' days or festival, whether discarded or retained by the Church of England, were regarded as auspicious dates for a marriage. For the sake of consistency with the rest of this thesis I will take January 1 as the beginning of each year rather than following the dating practices of the register.

A total of ninety weddings were recorded in the Ranworth register between July 1559 and November 1604. This represents an average of 2.11 weddings per year during this forty-five-year period. Nine, the highest number in any year, took place in 1559. No weddings were recorded between 1561 and 1565, and in 1579, 1593, 1596, 1601 and 1603. Only two marriages were solemnised on the same day, on 21 October 1604. The register does not indicate whether the two couples were married during the same service. There is no link between the surnames of either couple. No other weddings were held at less than a week apart from each other, and generally the gap was much greater. This suggests that there may have been co-operation within the parish to avoid weddings being too close together or clashing. Given the apparently high proportion of parishioners marrying one another, it may reasonably be considered that they were occasions involving the wider local community as well.

Only nineteen entries recorded that one of the couples resided in another parish. In each case it was the groom who came to marry in the bride's parish. The largest number, four, came from the adjacent parish of Panxworth. Two grooms came from the nearby village of Wroxham which was a couple of hours' sail up the River Bure. The others were scattered across Norfolk and Suffolk, with none from the Norwich city parishes. This

scarcity of references to other parishes may indicate that most people were resident in Ranworth at the time of their marriage. None of those described as outsiders were gentleman or women. This was the only social distinction observed in the transcripts. It may be that the gentry, who often possessed properties in a number of parishes were considered as exceptional. There is one slightly puzzling inconsistency in the entry of members of the Holdiche family. Robert Holdiche is not termed a 'gent' in his marriage entry of 9 June 1574 but is the only male in the marriage register to be given the title 'Mr.' Fraunces Holdiche was not given the suffix of gentlewoman' at her wedding to Thomas Mayhew of the parish of Clippesby on 14 July 1589. Perhaps her chosen spouse was not a member of the gentry, thus negatively affecting her status.

Before considering possible connections between wedding dates and liturgical feasts, monthly and daily patterns were analysed. The most popular month during the period 1559-1604 was October (twenty-three), followed by July (twenty-two). These two months cover well over half the Ranworth register entries. The most popular winter month was February (eight). The least number of weddings took place in December (one), followed by March and May with two each. Given May's customary association in books of hours with courtly romance, the month's unpopularity for Ranworth weddings suggests romance may not have been a major consideration.<sup>517</sup> A more cogent reason is considered in the next stage of this analysis. July's popularity is perhaps surprising in a month associated with cereal harvesting and October with sowing. It may be that weddings could be accommodated at busy times of the agricultural year better than months when cold and bad weather made travelling difficult in rural areas. Another practical consideration for the families of sixteenth-century brides and groom would be the choice of day. The most avoided day for weddings at Ranworth was Wednesday. One took place in 1560, two in 1561, another in 1565 and the last in 1566. Perhaps it was considered an inauspicious day. Wednesdays and Fridays may have been associated with Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, which would explain why those days of the week contained a penitential element. The Book of Common Prayer rubrics order that the litany, an extended form of penitential prayer, was to be said in churches on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and at other times as directed by the Bishop.<sup>518</sup> Bishops'

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<sup>517</sup> *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry: 15<sup>th</sup>-Century Manuscript*, ed. by Edmond Pognon, trans. by David McCrae (Geneva: Liber, 1983), p. 24.

<sup>518</sup> Litany (1559), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, p. 117.

visitation questions of the period sometimes enquire if a representative member of each household was present on those occasions. Only five weddings took place on Tuesdays, whereas Thursday was the most popular day with twenty-five, until the 1590s when it was overtaken by Friday. This may reflect a move away from pre-Reformation fasting practices and food prohibitions associated with Friday. It may also reveal a diminishing place for superstition. The social historian Keith Thomas observes that association with Christ's crucifixion made Friday an inauspicious day for new ventures, such as marriage or travelling, or even nail-cutting, ploughing, shoeing or digging.<sup>519</sup>

This gradual change would also have involved the consent of the incumbent. Thomas Wright, who was instituted as Vicar in 1582, conducted fifteen of the twenty-four recorded Friday weddings. This may indicate a more Protestant attitude on his part towards Friday observance. Keith Thomas notes that there were also specific days that were considered inauspicious for new beginnings. He cites Lord Burghley's advice to his son not to undertake any enterprise on three Mondays of the year: the alleged anniversaries of Abel's murder (first Monday in April), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (second in August) and Judas Iscariot's birth (last in December).<sup>520</sup> No weddings are recorded at Ranworth on those days.

The historian David Cressy observes that several types of calendrical schemes were prevalent in Elizabethan England, namely agricultural, astronomical, Christian, customary, dynastic, legal, local, natural and pagan. Cressy describes a 'calendrical consciousness [that] permeated people's lives and can be traced in their private reckonings as well as community observances.' Within this consciousness, he views the Church calendar as providing an overarching framework, applied in different ways according to people's status and environment.<sup>521</sup>

It is clear from the register's evidence that some days were more convenient than others and some periods of the Church's calendar were also apparently avoided through widespread custom. Around the year 365 A.D., the Council of Laodicea forbade

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<sup>519</sup> Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 740.

<sup>520</sup> Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 736.

<sup>521</sup> David Cressy, 'The Protestant Calendar and the Vocabulary of Celebration in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 29, 1 (Jan., 1990), 31-52 (pp. 33, 32).



matrimony during Lent, and the Sarum calendar, in common with medieval Western Christendom, forbade marriage between the beginning of Advent to the Octave of the Epiphany on January 15, from Septuagesima Sunday until the Octave of Easter, a period of slightly over ten weeks and from the Sunday before the Ascension to the Octave of Pentecost, which was slightly over three weeks. Unlike the Catholic Church, whose Reformation reduced the prohibited periods to Advent and Lent, the Elizabethan Church of England continued to observe these periods of exclusion. They did not form part of canon law but continued to be widely observed. Bishops' articles made enquiries about their observance, and marriage during those periods required a special licence. Failure to obtain such a licence could lead to heavy fines.<sup>522</sup>

Weddings seldom took place in Lent, with only two March entries recorded, and only once during the penitential season of Advent. One wonders if there were reasons for John Eshe and Lucy Teneye's wedding in December 1594 to happen in haste. The first of the March weddings took place on a Wednesday in 1560, manifesting the rejection of one or more religious taboos. However, none occurred at Christmas or during Holy Week and the first week of Easter, but two out of three January weddings took place during the Octave of the Epiphany. Devotional customs may have been retained by some but ignored by others. It is possible that custom and practicality were equally important in finding suitable wedding dates. For example, May was an even less popular month for marriage than January, with only two entries. Available dates in the month may have been constricted by the constantly moving feasts of Easter and Whitsunday but were also a time when food stocks were running low before their summer replenishment.<sup>523</sup>

Researching possible links between marriage dates and feast days has proved complex and to a large extent inconclusive. I have examined register entries in conjunction with the pre-Reformation Norwich diocesan calendar as found in the Sarum rite of the Ranworth Antiphoner and reformed calendar of the Book of Common Prayer. The latter was contemporary to the Ranworth register, the former abolished but likely to be remembered. Cressy argues that the Prayer Book calendar largely 'defestivalised' the Church of England year, reducing the number of feast days by nearly four-fifths, from

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<sup>522</sup> Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 741.

<sup>523</sup> I am very grateful to Alec Ryrie for this suggestion.

one hundred and twenty-five in the Sarum calendar to twenty-seven in his estimation.<sup>524</sup> However, Cressy has excluded the minor festivals of the new calendar, which did not allow for the suspension of work for prayer and worship, but may nonetheless have possessed local or personal significance. Conversely, it could be argued that a reduced number of holy days of obligation may have created more wedding dates that did not clash with other services.

Matching marriage dates to two liturgical calendars did not prove to be a straightforward exercise. The extensive nature of the Sarum calendar may have made feast days harder to avoid and coincidences more likely. However, between June 1559 and 1604 there were three saints' days on which three weddings were held. One was on July 31, the feast of St Germanus of Auxerre, in the years 1559, 1592 and 1599. Germanus does not seem to have had a notable East Anglian following in the Middle Ages, but it is interesting to note that the latter two of those weddings involved gentry couples. Another was the feast of St Wulfram, in 1559, 1576 and 1581. His feast day, October 15, fell in a relatively popular month for weddings, but had been removed from the Prayer Book calendar. However, he may have been remembered in a small port like Ranworth as saintly protector against peril at sea. Major festivals' observance began the previous evening, and principal feasts were observed during their Octave, or seven days following, even if obscured by another saint's day. For example, the wedding of John and Mary Stamford took place on 10 August 1578. This was the feast day of St Lawrence, deacon and martyr in both the Sarum and Prayer Book calendars. St Lawrence was a popular Broadland saint, patron of nearby parish churches and had been depicted on the Ranworth rood screen. However, August 10 also fell within the Octave of the abolished Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, one of the most popular late medieval cults.

These dates appear to be significant, but it cannot be determined from one source of evidence whether the date had been governed by a feast or was simply a happy coincidence that the families concerned may have surreptitiously seen as additional blessings upon the couple's union. Also, practical needs to find a day and month that would be convenient may have governed events more than their devotional aspect. However, it is interesting to note that in the relatively sparse wedding month of

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<sup>524</sup> Cressy, 'The Protestant Calendar', 31-52 (p. 34).

September, almost half of Ranworth weddings occurred during the Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, including the marriage of the 1591 marriage of Elizabeth Holdiche to Henry Cornwallis, a member of a prominent Suffolk recusant family.

It is perhaps more helpful to consider that the choice of wedding dates in Ranworth during this period were governed by a matrix of considerations and an interlocking approach to the year's cycles that Cressy describes as a calendrical consciousness in early modern England.<sup>525</sup> This suggests that unless a couple was forced to marry in haste due to pregnancy or other pressing reasons, decisions over wedding dates involved a range of considerations and involved negotiation, not least with the parson.<sup>526</sup>

The conformist register.

Ranworth's register offers primary evidence of conformity. It served as an activity log for parsons, who could put this book into the archdeacon's hands as a record of their conformity in promoting and undertaking occasional offices in accordance with their ordination vows and episcopal visitation articles. The register also demonstrates the willingness of parishioners to mark their significant life events by conforming to the liturgy of the parish church. It also contains, both explicitly and implicitly, traces of other conformities required of early modern English clergy and parishioners.

Although widely viewed as an administrative document for the lowest strata of the Tudor state, it is also a register of liturgical activity, recording the reach of the new Church of England into parishioners' lives through an imposed religious framework encompassing their significant life events. Updating the register was likely to have been an integral part of church life. The weekly ritual of its examination and addition of fresh entries, witnessed by churchwardens following public worship, the locking and unlocking of the parish chest would have been a para-liturgical activity whenever it was observed. In the

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<sup>525</sup> Cressy, 'The Protestant Calendar', 31-52 (pp. 32-33).

<sup>526</sup> P. E. H. Hair, 'Bridal Pregnancy in Earlier Rural England Further Examined', *Population Studies*, 24, 1 (March 1970), 59-70 (p. 59). Hair estimates that one sixth of brides between 1540 and 1700 were pregnant on their wedding day, based on a sample of parish register entries for weddings and baptisms or births.

majority of parishes where churchwardens' accounts have not survived, the register would be the sole record of services held in the parish. Therefore, they provided hard evidence of a parson's level of activity and a parish's compliance to present at Archdeacons' visitations.

From their first day in office, conformity to the registration injunction was a requirement upon all incumbents. Among the articles subscribed to on their institution by the bishop, they undertook to keep the parish register book according to Queen Elizabeth's injunctions.<sup>527</sup> They could only perform this with the active co-operation of at least one churchwarden, and with both after 1603, to gain access to the register. The need to have three keys to open the chest meant that wardens and incumbent would theoretically need to be present together at least once on a Sunday, adding one manifestation of conformity, attending public worship, to another. Another by-product of the register injunctions was that they required incumbents and wardens to meet together on a weekly basis outside the times of worship and required them, with legal penalties for failing to do so, to work together in this capacity at least.

Within the clergy and churchwardens' sphere of authority, using the registers required diligence and a degree of co-operation in order to conform to state and ecclesiastical regulations. However, this was just one of an increasing number of interlocking areas of conformity that they were expected to observe and uphold. It is worth considering the 1597 register injunction with other changes that were introduced within their immediate period. In particular, the privy council order promulgated on Christmas Day, 1596, and subsequent changes in parochial poor relief stipulated by the Statute of 1597.<sup>528</sup>

Following the failure of two years' harvests, the privy council issued injunctions against excessive consumption and food hoarding and in support of greater parochial poor relief. In addition, households were required to forego supper once a week and to give the food they saved as alms. Churchwardens were required to monitor observance of these injunctions and return certificates that also identified disobedient and uncharitable

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<sup>512</sup> Bigland, *Observations on marriages, baptisms and burials*, p. 2.

<sup>528</sup> *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, ed. by J.R. Dasent, 32 vols (London, 1890-1907), XXVI (1596-97), pp. 383-86. Act for the Relief of the Poor; 39 Eliz. I, cc. 3 & 4, 1597.

parishioners.<sup>529</sup> The early modern English historian Steve Hindle describes the Privy Council order as entirely consistent with ‘the long-recognized desire of the late Elizabethan regime to vindicate its commonwealth credentials by mitigating the sufferings of the poor.’ The State’s ‘prerogative paternalism’ was centrally-conceived but locally enacted by the same officers who dutifully witnessed the recording of baptisms, marriages and burials.<sup>530</sup> It was undoubtedly self-interested in preventing the spread of grain riots, rumoured to have occurred in Norwich in November 1595, as flour prices tripled within four years. However, the values of abstinence and hospitality implicit in the privy council’s orders were theologically as much as pragmatically driven.

Archbishop Whitgift commended the orders to the bench of bishops and Samuel Gardiner, Vicar of Ormesby in Norwich Diocese, praised Bishop Redman’s zeal in promoting these sanctions across his see.<sup>531</sup> The orders were accompanied by a national preaching campaign which centred on three sermons from the *Book of Homilies*, namely the homilies on good works and fasting, almsgiving and repentance and reconciliation with God.<sup>532</sup> The second part of the homily on fasting promotes a second fast-day during the week in addition to the Friday fast that the Church of England inherited from the medieval Church. According to the homily, the second fast day would benefit not just the observer, but the coastal fishing towns that provided the bastion of national defence, the Navy. It asks the congregation, ‘if the Prince requested our obedience to forebear one day from flesh more than we do, and to be contented with one meal in the same day, should not our own commodity thereby persuade us to subjection?’<sup>533</sup> This additional half-day fast had been fixed on Wednesdays by statute in the 1563 Navigation Act. Instigated by Sir William Cecil, Elizabeth I’s chief minister, it was intended to mitigate the Reformation’s impact in the English fishing industry, which also provided the Navy’s manpower when required. The Act remained in force throughout Elizabeth I’s reign.

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<sup>529</sup> Steve Hindle, ‘Dearth, Fasting and Alms: The Campaign for General Hospitality in Early Modern Britain’, *Past & Present*, (August 2001), 44-86 (pp. 44-45).

<sup>530</sup> Hindle, ‘Dearth, Fasting and Alms’, 44-86 (pp. 45, 46).

<sup>531</sup> Samuel Gardiner, *The Cognizance of a True Christian, or The Outward Marks whereby He May Better Be Known: Consisting Especially in these Two Duties: Fasting and Giving of Almes: Verie Needfull for these Difficult Times* (London, 1597). William Redman was Bishop of Norwich from 1595 to 1602.

<sup>532</sup> ‘The Second Part of the Homily of Fasting’, *Homilies*, pp. 165-76, 230-40, 324-41.

<sup>533</sup> ‘The Second Part of the Homily of Fasting’, *Homilies*, p. 172.

The English Literature scholar Naya Tsentourou cites Ryrie's observance that fasting was a site of tension in Protestant England, between official expectation and private practices.<sup>534</sup> Notwithstanding this caveat, the relevance of these legal fasting initiatives, the Navigation Act and 1597 privy council order, to the overall pattern of wedding days casts a stronger light on the Ranworth register's evidence. The last Wednesday wedding took place in 1566, three years after the introduction of 'Cecil's fast', as it was nicknamed.<sup>535</sup> Like most innovations in rural Norfolk, it may have taken a few years to become embedded, particularly if the incumbent, the Marian appointee John Taylor, may have possessed no great enthusiasm for an economically-based fast intended to safeguard English Protestantism. Conversely, Taylor's successor Thomas Wright was potentially a more self-consciously Protestant minister who would have been more disposed to preserve Wednesday's half-fast. Wright allowed an increasing number of Friday weddings, suggesting a different attitude towards traditional fasting. Whereas the laws of Protestant England stipulated salt-water fish for Wednesday supper, it may have been possible for a Ranworth household to host an ample feast on a Friday, even within the constraints of traditional fasting rules. The second part of the homily on fasting describes the variety of traditional practices:

They have not all one uniform order in fasting. For some do fast and abstain from fish and flesh. Some, when they fast, eat nothing but fish. Others there are, which when they fast, eat of all water-fouls, aswell as of fish, grounding themselves upon Moses, that such fouls have their substance of the water, as the fishes have. Some others when they fast, will neither eat hearbs nor eggs. Others when they fast, eat nothing at all, no not so much as dry bread. Some fast from all manner of food till night, and then eat, without making any choice or difference of meats.

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<sup>534</sup> Naya Tsentourou, Untitled review, *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, (April 2014), <<http://www.northernrenaissance.org/natalie-mears-and-alec-ryrie-eds-worship-and-the-parish-church-in-early-modern-britain-ashgate-2013/>>, [accessed 17 April 2018]. See Alec Ryrie, 'The Fall and Rise of Fasting in the British Reformation', *Worship and the Parish Church in Early Modern Britain*, ed. by Natalie Mears and Alec Ryrie (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 89-108 (pp. 104-07).

<sup>535</sup> Claire Ridgeway, 'Cecil's Fast and Elizabeth I's Navy', <<http://www.elizabethfiles.com/cecils-fast-and-elizabeth-is-navy/3487/>>, [accessed 20 April 2018].

[...] And for all this diversity of fasting, yet charity the very true bond of Christian peace was not broken [...].<sup>536</sup>

Ranworth parishioners would have been able to purchase fish from the major fishing port of Great Yarmouth nearby, or fresh water fish from their own extensive broad or lake that was linked to the River Bure. An abundance of waterfowl throughout the year could have furnished lavish feasts without departing from religious tradition.

The privy council order of 1596 illustrates the growing responsibilities of churchwardens in relation to Christian community life and how it addressed poverty, but subsequent poor relief legislation would be of greater consequence in relation to required transcription of parish registers. The 1597 'Act for the Relief of the Poor' was an incremental development in the Tudor dynasty's strengthening of state administration. It strengthened the 1572 Poor Law that required parish to levy poor rates and appoint overseers to raise funds and distribute according to need and whether the poor in question were considered deserving of aid or not. The 1597 legislation increased the role of overseer, who became a magistrate's appointee. More importantly in relation to parish registers, distinguished between the 'settled' and vagrant poor. The former would be supported by 'outdoor' or 'indoor' relief, according to their age and capacity and the parish's resources, the latter would be punished and put to work or driven away. Parish register entries could provide a largely reliable, witnessed source of pertinent information about residency, even if illiterate churchwardens may have needed to take the minister's word on trust about what was written there.

The timing of the injunction to transcribe parish registers could hardly be more pertinent to this development, which would set the pattern for English poor relief until the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. For many of the poor, parish register entries would have been the only consistent legal record of their existence. Moreover, for those who were baptised or had baptised children or were married, the registers' parochial basis offered evidence of residency. In the case of those married by banns, their entries also recorded their place of residency outside the parish and the possibility that they may have been

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<sup>536</sup> 'The Second Part of the Homily of Fasting', *Homilies*, p. 173.

another parish's responsibility. Perhaps the absence of reference to other parishes in gentry marriage entries would have been considered gratuitous.

Connection with poor relief may also have been a factor in the transcription of parish registers. Although the rhetoric of their ordinance emphasises keeping a record for posterity, the greatest concern for busy churchwardens and overseers would have been with the needs of the living, the majority of whom would have been born after Elizabeth I's accession.

The register attests to another, less frequent act of conformity. In this book that contains the registration activities of parochial officialdom, one inscription at the back of the register offers an intriguing glimpse of a personal conformity being exacted:

Item that Robert Halocke thelder did make his open et publique submission et declaracion of his conformitie to his Maties Lawes et statutes the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 1614, in the open Church of Ranworth as he was inioyned by Mr. Chaunceler.

This declaration of conformity is most likely to have been the oath of allegiance required by the 1606 Act 'for the better discovering and repressing of Popish recusants.'<sup>537</sup> This extensive oath was to be sworn by suspected recusants, who had to publicly affirm their obedience to James I as legitimate ruler, reject papal authority that could be exercised against him and to report knowledge of conspiracies against the king, 'without any Evasion, or mental evasion, or secret reservation whatsoever.'<sup>538</sup> The Ranworth register, like the parish's communion cup, bore the impress of public acts of conformity, witnessed within the public theatre of the church building. This unusual entry would have provided lasting proof of Halocke's conformity and also Wright's diligence as incumbent in enforcing the requirement.

The Ranworth register attests to a range of conformities required by officialdom from clergy, churchwardens and parishioners, from the requirement to maintain the book to the observance of the rites of the Church of England it recorded. However, there is much that

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<sup>537</sup> An Act for the better discovering and repressing of Popish recusants; 3 & 4 James I c.4, 1606.

<sup>538</sup> 3 & 4 James I c.4, 1606.



the Ranworth register does not express about liturgical conformity. It tells the reader which rites were performed, but not how they were conducted or what they contained. Marriage offers a good example of the register's *lacunae*. The rubrics of the vernacular Book of Common Prayer from 1549 onwards compressed and truncated the Church of England's matrimonial rite. The Sarum rite began in the porch, the symbolic threshold of the church. Within this liminal space, consent was given and rings were blessed, after which the couple entered the building in procession. The Prayer Book rubrics brought the vows together with promises of betrothal into 'the bodie of the churche,' in other words, the nave.<sup>539</sup> In the previous rite, the couple prostrated themselves in the middle of the nave and were covered by a canopy or cloths laid over them whilst psalms and prayers were sung over them, prior to their blessing and nuptial mass.<sup>540</sup> The Ranworth register does not mention compliance with these rubrics, whether or not the wedding took place entirely inside the church or even if it took place in a consecrated setting. Until the passage of the 1753 Marriage Act, legal marriage only required a Church of England minister to officiate, regardless of location.

Although it may seem reasonable to suppose that Elizabethan marriages took place in church, this could only be said in general terms about baptism. Christenings were permitted in the home when a baby was not expected to live or their mother's life was in danger. Until 1603, midwives were allowed by the Church of England to baptise at home, but either such christenings were recorded without differentiation or were not recorded at all. In addition, privileged families may also have preferred private baptism at home, even though this was enjoined only to be undertaken in emergencies or when families possessed their own private chapel.

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<sup>539</sup> Solemnization of matrimony (1549), *Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Cummings, pp. 64-66.

<sup>540</sup> Monti, *A Sense of the Sacred*, pp. 227-31.

The 'decent' register.

It is already evident from this multi-faceted interrogation of the Ranworth register that the introduction of parish registers represents more than a Tudor drive towards administrative efficiency or some unrealised fiscal motive. Despite an apparent theological neutrality that enabled register keeping to be maintained throughout the profound ecclesiastical changes of the mid-sixteenth century, they were inevitably recorded traces of community spiritual life, which can sometimes be traced through the language and pattern of their entries. Equally, there may be spiritual implications in late sixteenth-century transcripts' omissions. Like the cup, which physically and visually erased a sacramental past, the registers were agents of a seismic cultural and theological shift. Although this was a subtler transformation than the wholesale chalice replacement programme, it was an equally swift national change from recording the departed elite in liturgical books that perpetuated their memory in the prayers of the living to creating a universal non-liturgical record. In the absence of any stated theological significance, a perceptible purification of remembrance had occurred.

This was compounded by the Constitution of 1597 and subsequent canon of 1604 that emphasised the importance of compiling the parish register from the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth I. In an era when dating was still largely dominated by the regnal system, this made a convenient starting point. It possibly saved parishes money by reducing the number of pages necessary and in some cases, scribal fees. However, by not preserving the memory of those whose services occurred before that date, their identities and legitimacy was allowed to fade.

Placing the Ranworth register into a wider local context, it is evident that the injunctions of 1597 provide a starting point at Ranworth and most of the other registers in the present day Blofield deanery. This mainly rural area between the Rivers Bure and Yare, bounded by Norwich's suburbs in the west and Great Yarmouth to the east, reveals only two surviving registers from 1538, one from 1543 and only two from the two intervening reigns. Out of the oldest surviving registers of thirty parishes, the entries of fourteen commence in the years 1558-63 whilst nine come from the Caroline restoration of 1660 onwards. This demonstrates the creation of a final watershed between those whose rites of passage were conducted with Book of Common Prayer rather than the Sarum rite.

Whether or not this consequence was intended at the time, the new parchment registers would generally exclude all the record of baptisms, sacramental weddings and requiems and their recipients under the old dispensation.

There is some evidence for shifting belief and practice in the baptism section of the Ranworth register. From 1582 onwards, the word ‘baptised’ is consistently substituted for ‘christened’, and parents’ names are also recorded. It seems significant that this permanent change occurred in the year of Thomas Wright’s institution as Vicar. His predecessor, Sir John Taylor, had been instituted as a crown appointee in the last year of Mary I’s reign, so it may be that a more evangelical wind was suddenly blowing through Ranworth. The fact that this change of wording was included in the parchment transcript does suggest some scribal fidelity to the original entries. If it were from the pen of Thomas Wright, it may be that he distanced himself from the christening rites performed by his predecessor. Wright was a self-proclaimed baptizer, using the more evangelical term. The third child that he baptized at Ranworth was his daughter, Thomasyn, on 9 September 1582. This would have been a very early public demonstration in his ministry of a Reformed clerical family life that he was modelling for his parishioners.

There is a further word to be considered in relation to the spiritual aspects of Ranworth’s register, which is decency. Andrew Gordon describes the injunctions that engendered the transcription of parish registers onto parchment as ‘a memorial moment’, in which parish records were re-ordered and freshly presented as ‘material representations of parish memory.’<sup>541</sup> However, their roots lie much closer to the beginning of Elizabeth I’s reign. On 9 March 1563 a Bill was introduced to the House of Commons with Archbishop Parker’s approval that would have required every diocese in England to keep a central register in ‘some decent book of parchment’ as a perpetual memory and testament.<sup>542</sup> It

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<sup>541</sup> Gordon, ‘The Paper Parish’, p. 51.

<sup>542</sup> ‘A Bill to Autorize every Archbishop and Bishop to erect one Office of Registership of all the Church Books, to be kept in every diocese’, cited by Burn, *Registrum Ecclesiae Parochialis*, pp. 20-21.

was one of a large number of bills that failed to make their passage through a Parliament that was pre-occupied with economic issues.<sup>543</sup>

Although this aim would take over three decades to become a reality, it is significant to note that Parker's proposed centralising registration strategy was being promoted at a similar time to his campaign to replace chalices with 'decent' communion cups.<sup>544</sup> Under the later injunctions, the parish registers themselves were also required to conform to the decency of parchment volumes. Parker's use of the term 'decent' was common to both, which raises the question of whether these very different material objects shared an inherent or visible characteristic. It is important to remember that Parker was using a new English word, 'decent' to express the properties of these objects. The word was derived from *decentia*, the nominative singular form of the Latin adjective *decens*, and its first recorded uses occurred in the late 1530s. *Decens* was used as a descriptor of the inherent and visible, and could mean something that was fitting, becoming, well-proportioned or symmetrical.<sup>545</sup> Decency did not acquire its modest connotations until the 1630s and its Elizabethan meaning principally centred on appropriateness.<sup>546</sup> Its earliest usages were to express what was fitting in relation to circumstance or dignity.<sup>547</sup> It is therefore possible to answer the question on the most superficial level, that Parker's requirement reflects the quality and durability of the materials used for serious and lasting purposes. In the case of parish registers, a scribal formatting and editing of older, more anecdotal texts would have been added to its outward decency.

However, it would be spurious to restrict the concept of decency to this narrow sense. It could also be argued that the conformity of their contents and the matrix of conformities that surrounded its existence makes them a universal benchmark of a particular community's conformity and lifestyles, both of which fall within a sixteenth-century definition of the word 'decent'. Furthermore, consideration of the communion cup's

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<sup>543</sup> Rosemary Sgroi, '2<sup>nd</sup> Parliament of Queen Elizabeth I, 5 Eliz. I, 8', <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/parliament/1563>>, [accessed 20 April 2018].

<sup>544</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 199.

<sup>545</sup> 'decens', *Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. by James Morwood (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005).

<sup>546</sup> Douglas Harper, 'decencies,' *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/decencies>>, [accessed 21 April 2018].

<sup>547</sup> 'decent', *Oxford English Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002).

‘decency’ earlier in this thesis has already taken the question further. Decency certainly existed as a Calvinist value with moral and aesthetic resonances. Parker’s repeated use of ‘decent’ also draws attention back to himself and his programme of grafting the Church of England onto the stump of the patristic, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon English Church, truncated from its luxurious medieval overgrowth. The registers would provide a record for posterity of conforming English Christians. In his eventually fulfilled proposal for central diocesan registries, the Church of England would serve the monarchical state in a professional administrative capacity, as it had through most of the Middle Ages.

Parker was neither the first Archbishop of Canterbury nor the last to stress the importance of decency in church life. Parker used the term in his 1565 Advertisements, as Cranmer had in his introduction to the Book of Common Prayer, and it was a term Archbishop Whitgift appealed to as he sought to impose conformity on the Church of England’s puritan wing. Finally, the editing permitted in transcripts by injunctions allowed for a certain forgetfulness of the pre-Elizabethan past and a spiritual cleansing of parish records. In *The Stripping of the Altars*, Duffy quotes the early evangelical Thomas Becon’s satire on the commemoration of the departed in the bede-rolls of pre-Reformation parish churches.<sup>548</sup> These lists of benefactors were intended to be remembered and prayed for by name, and Duffy describes their silencing as an ‘act of oblivion’.<sup>549</sup> Similarly, Duffy writes that

The ripping out of the memorials of the dead [...] was a practical enactment of that silencing and distancing. The dead became as shadowy as the blanks in the stripped matrices of their gravestones, where once their images and their inscriptions had named them, and asserted their trust in, and claims on, the living.<sup>550</sup>

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<sup>548</sup> Thomas Becon, *The displaying of the Popish masse vvherein thou shalt see, what a wicked idoll the masse is, and what great difference there is between the Lords Supper and the Popes Masse: againe, what Popes brought in every part of the masse, and counted it together in such monstrous sort, as it is now used in the Popes kingdome* (London: 1559), pp. 232-34.

<sup>549</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 134, 495.

<sup>550</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 494-95.

Whether intentionally or not, the application of official ordinances on preserving register entries for posterity meant that for pre-Elizabethan parishioners in Ranworth and the vast majority of parishes, the significant life events and consequently the names of non-elite individuals would pass from living memory. They were part of a complex and conflicted past. In his flyleaf inscription, the early eighteenth-century Vicar of Ranworth described the register as having its first birth in 1559. Those who may have entered before belonged to the prehistory of the irrevocably established Church of England and consequently forgotten. Unlike the obits for patrons and donors in the Sarum rite service books of monasteries and parishes which were purged on iconoclastic bonfires, these other names were allowed to be discarded or quietly decay. However, the end result would be the same.

#### Conclusion.

The Ranworth parish register appears as an incremental and enduring development within the history of English parochial administration. Certainly, it has fared better than its paper predecessor, whose starting date can only be assumed. Unlike the other period artefacts in this thesis, its purpose seems to have been theologically neutral and yet theology is evident within. It is important to bear in mind that this was a liturgical register of the number and frequency of pastoral services that were performed, a benchmark of parishioners' adherence to the parish church and conformity with its liturgical practices. Within its almost entirely factual contents, glimpses of changing beliefs can be observed.

The purpose of including an examination of the Ranworth parish register is in part to populate the place where the other artefacts were located. In doing so, it is important to recognise its obvious limitations. It does not equate to a population census or even a civil register of births, marriages and deaths. Nor does it reveal to posterity of long-term parishioners who would have been neither baptised nor married nor buried at Ranworth. It is a liturgical register of acts of worship that contained parishioners' rites of passage, recording their purpose without revealing much of their content. To an extent, it represents an aspiration that in the parishes of the reformed Church of England,

ecclesiastical and social life should be treated as one. This aspiration would be increasingly unfulfilled in the century following 1538.

However, the introduction of parish registers represents more than simply a drive towards administrative efficiency or some unrealised fiscal motive. It was a further example of the shifting emphasis from ecclesiastical to parochial identity through new objects, as has already been observed in the Ranworth cup chapter. By moving the recording of the departed from liturgical books that continued to associate them with the prayer and worship of the living, there is a perceptible theological purification of their remembrance.

Like the Book of Common Prayer, Erasmus's *Paraphrases*, English Bibles and new communion cups, parish registers are Reformation artefacts. They reflect the same official aspirations for a national church in which life's beginning, end and reproduction were indivisible from the Church of England's reformed rites of passage. This would undoubtedly have influenced how subsequent generations of clergy and parishioners viewed the past.

## Conclusion.

Examination of the four post-Reformation artefacts at Ranworth Church has revealed a substantial amount of information and fresh hermeneutic perspectives that open up new ways to reconstruct Ranworth's parish life in an era of rapid transformation. This may also have implications for other early modern local studies where material evidence can imaginatively interact with surviving written sources and be interrogated from a range of academic disciplines and historical perspectives. Studying the objects primarily from their shared location rather than their discrete genres has enabled them to be read as interrelated components of the same overarching structure, the parish church. Beyond fulfilling their ordained functions, they were visible symbols of the powerful conformist influences that reshaped the post-Reformation parish church, notwithstanding its considerable continuity with traditional religion through its buildings and hierarchical structures.

The *Paraphrases* provided not only a vernacular text of Erasmus's New Testament that had inspired William Tyndale and other early evangelicals, but also the former's authoritative exposition of those scriptures. The English translators' prefaces and dedications set out a grand narrative of an early evangelical Church of England in which reforms were royally instigated. These divinely-inspired actions were portrayed as entirely necessary to reconnect the Church of England with its New Testament and Patristic era roots. The papacy and religious orders were denounced as belonging to a historical middle period in which superstition and idolatry had flourished at the expense of true faith. Erasmus had intended his *Philosophia Christi* to be practiced by Catholics, but its emphasis on an inner, Biblically-grounded faith in which images were unnecessary made its home chiefly among high-status early English evangelicals. The combination of people's outward conformity with some allowance for inner latitude that was sought in Edward VI and Elizabeth I's reign could not be achieved by revealed faith alone. The prefaces of the English *Paraphrases* offered a historical justification for the Reformation that would reconfigure memories of the recent past, where necessary.

Erasmus's moderating exegesis set hermeneutical boundaries that hedged in as well as expanded upon the scriptures. Haunted by memories of the German Peasant's War, the Anabaptist commune of Munster and fear of rebellion at home, officialdom sought to



prevent unguided and unfettered Bible study even among clergy. Erasmus had been a well-known and highly respected scholar in England, whose reputation had largely survived intact and was admired by all sides throughout the period of this study. The theological flexibility of his writings continued to grow after his death in the service of conservative reform. It is not surprising that Udall's introductory preface idealised his memory. The clear evidence of use in the examined volumes of the English *Paraphrases* suggests that their imposition was largely successful in one sense. How Norfolk clergy and laity applied what they read, marked, learned and inwardly digested remains less clear. The *Ave Maria* monogram in the Paston copy provides an example of personal responses diverging from official intentions. In addition to moderating belief and reconfiguring devotional memory, Erasmus promoted the humanist philology from which terms such as decency were derived. His *Philosophia* may also have informed the concept of 'decency' prescribed for the parish register transcripts and communion cups, as well as forming decency as an inner value and outward aesthetic. The markings on the Ranworth copy demonstrate readers' responses to the *Paraphrases* that reflect intellectual engagement with Erasmus's text and also non-verbal marks that may express inner, spiritual responses.

The introduction of Ranworth's 1567 communion cup severed one link with medieval Mass plate whilst its counterpart paten maintained it, albeit in a transfigured manner. The chalice replacement programme was a visible testament to the power of bishops to impose order in parochial worship, a power which became increasingly contentious in some parts of the Church of England during the latter part of the sixteenth century. The Ranworth cup's conformity also expressed decency in its unadorned, functional design and the fact that it was newly manufactured. It was untainted by association with the idolatrous worship of the past, yet it retained the shape of a stemmed cup, rather than resembling a Calvinist beaker. Its inscription defined it as a parochial object, intended for communal use but also a physical touchstone for conformity. The *Homilies* provided a supporting text that taught that sharing a common eucharistic cup was a restoration and not an innovation.

However, the retention of a pre-Reformation paten points to a sanitized sense of continuity. Whatever image had been etched at its centre was presumably beaten into oblivion in Cobbold's workshop, leaving only its rim in its original shape. This and other

surviving Norfolk examples show that these accessories to the Mass were not beyond redemption. For some, it may have offered a comforting connection with a rich but obliterated devotional past. For others it may have represented a material triumph over idolatry. All that can be said with certainty is that it did not provoke comment during period Archdeacons' visitations. The post-iconoclastic use of the paten at the Lord's Supper in Ranworth could be described as a microcosm of how the church building itself was reconfigured in fulfilment of Bishop Parkhurst's 1561 injunction by removing and filling in images' former locations 'and the places where they were set comely and decently to be made up with comely expedition.'<sup>551</sup>

Like the *Paraphrases*, the parish register transcript also had its genesis in the period of early evangelical reform and preserved the memory of parochial births and deaths from Elizabeth I's Injunctions onwards. The register was an instrument of conformity *par excellence*, cascading down from its regular inspection and entries by clergy and churchwardens and periodically by archdeacons to the occasional offices required of parishioners around the three key moments of early modern life; their birth, marriage and death. However, as later inscriptions attest, it also took on a local life of its own as repository of local history, in which only those who were alive after the establishment of Protestantism would be remembered by posterity. The omission of entries from previous reigns was not prohibited by legislation, but was allowed by it. This achieved a similar result. Apart from the memorialized elite, the memory of Ranworth's generations in the recent past was left to slowly fade with the religious culture they had belonged to.

The Holdiche monument is a manifestation of a family's desire for one of its own to be remembered for posterity, without the pious and moral precepts that frequently appeared on period memorials. Although it represents a distillation of the spirit of royal and episcopal injunctions, its design and location represent different and more complex social processes than the other artefacts. Its location also reflects continuity with pre-Reformation forebears and affinity to contemporaneous memorials within the Holdiche's gentry peer group.

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<sup>551</sup> *Visitation Articles*, ed. by Frere and Kennedy, p. 100.

Thomas Holdiche's tomb was also decent in its restrained inscription and expression of the dignity of a Norfolk gentleman, but also demonstrated a redefined relationship within the living and departed that preserved precept but excluded prayer. His family could remember him but no longer hasten the purging he wrote of in his will's soul bequest. However, they could honour his memory by wearing his rings and living by their motto, *Amate Invicem*.

Whilst it would be misleading to treat Holdiche as a representative figure, it is conceivable that he had connections with all four artefacts. He would have received communion from the cup, he may have read or heard passages of the *Paraphrases*, his burial was recorded in the register and his monument records his presence there for posterity. Arguably, Holdiche's example can be used to exemplify how each artefact was bound up with parish life. Although he was not a typical parishioner, gentry formed a larger part of Norfolk's population than they did in other counties. Furthermore, his position as a landowner would have added local weight to his apparent religious conservatism. Following his death, his memorial would continue as a reminder of his beliefs and influence.

In different ways and to varying extents, this study has shed light on the current post-Reformation themes of conformity, decency, moderation and memory that characterise the strategies deployed by the Church of England's leadership to establish a Protestant identity for both Church and Society. Just as the objects studied here were brought into functional and symbolic relationships by human activity, these themes appear strongly intertwined. Conformity could be achieved with the aid of selective memory and maintained by moderation in order to achieve a general decency.

The degrees of success that England's political and religious elite experienced in achieving these objectives remains difficult to quantify. A saying attributed to Elizabeth I was that she had no desire to open a window into men's souls. Even if apocryphal, this statement characterises a tacit acceptance of religious pluralism at the highest level, providing that English subjects remained loyal to the monarch, attended church regularly, received communion there and did not disturb the peace. From this perspective, the limited objectives of sixteenth-century Reform were evidently being carried out in Ranworth. The evidence of Ranworth does not enable a present-day researcher to see

much beyond sixteenth-century people's outward activities. The existence of these artefacts and evidence of their uses demonstrates that required objects were dutifully purchased and were engaged with by Ranworth's office holders and parishioners. The implications of this are considerable.

The parish church occupied a central place within community life as a weekly meeting place, where the dynamics of social hierarchies were highly evident and ecclesiastical authority was enacted. In this setting, the four artefacts would have been more than simply props for the social and spiritual dramas that were enacted there. Following the destruction of a pre-Reformation material culture that offered protection through blessed or miraculous objects, the new artefacts accompanied and sometimes supported parishioners' quests for succour in this life and salvation at its end. This study has become a reflexive exercise. It began as an interrogation of the artefacts from a number of academic disciplines, but their examination has revealed surprising 'voices' of their own that will continue to shape our understanding of the post-Reformation era.

Appendix I. Gazetteer of Erasmus's *Paraphrases* volumes examined at the Dean and Chapter's Library, Norwich Cathedral.

**Ashby St Mary [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. X3b.1].**

1552 edition, with damaged binding. Only one oak board, laced by leather thongs remains, and leather cover has disappeared. Beetle damaged. Three cut leaf stubs at beginning of volume. Surviving text begins with Nicholas Udall's dedication to Edward VI. Ink and smudge markings present. Last surviving leaf is 22<sup>nd</sup> leaf of alphabetical table.

The small south Norfolk village of Ashby St Mary is situated in Loddon Hundred. Thomas Bransey had been presented as Rector by Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk in 1524 and remained incumbent until 1567.<sup>552</sup>

**Bacton [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. Z5B.4].**

1548 edition, bound in pasteboard and tooled brown leather cover. Broken spine. Badly stained and beetle damaged. Fragment of frontispiece survives, with Latin and English inscriptions on reverse. Ink markings present. Glove topped with star watermark.

Bacton is a parish on the north east Norfolk coast was a small village that until the 1530s contained one of the leading pilgrimage destinations in England, the Cluniac Priory of Bromholm. Bromholm was a centre for the Holy Cross cult, possessing miracle-working fragments of the true cross that purportedly raised the dead and cured deafness. At the dissolution patronage of the parish church passed from the Prior to the crown and was bestowed upon Sir Thomas Wodehouse of Waxham. The manor belonged to the Paston family, religiously conservative members of the Norfolk gentry. The adjacent parish of Paston had also been part of Bromholm's patronage and was bestowed upon the Wodehouse family, who sold it to William Paston, who was lord of the manor. Both

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<sup>552</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, X, pp. 93-95.

Paston and Bacton were part of the Pastons' ancient patrimony. Before its dissolution, Bromholm Priory had been the burial place for leading members of the Paston family.

**Carbrooke [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. Z6A.6].**

1548 edition, bound in oak board and tooled brown leather cover. Latin MS used inside front and back covers as binder's waste. Some overlap with gather marks of Ranworth copy. Matthew fol.57 torn out, as in Ranworth copy. Glove with star and 'RB' band, quatrefoil-topped flagon with 'LP' band watermarks.

Carbrooke is a Breckland village near the market two of Watton, possessing an imposing fifteenth-century church with the second tallest church tower in Norfolk. It had been established as a Commanderie or community of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 1193 and became solely a parish church in 1540. Its incumbent, John Winter, was presented in that year by the last pre-Reformation Prior of the Knights Hospitallers, William Weston, and served there until 1564.<sup>553</sup>

**Guist [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. Z5B.3].**

1548 edition, bound in pasteboard and blind tooled brown leather cover. One brass clasp remaining, with four brass pins. Fragment of medieval MS. paper used as binder's waste. Surviving text begins with frontispiece. Ink, stylus and smudge marks present. Last surviving leaf is Acts fol.78 (Acts 27), followed by six cut leaf stubs. Guist is a north west Norfolk village whose parish church came under the patronage of Waltham Abbey, the last English religious house to be dissolved in 1540. Patronage was granted to the Townsend family of Raynham.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, II, pp. 334-43.

<sup>554</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, VIII, pp. 213-17.

**Hethersett [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. X4A.1].**

1552 edition, with damaged binding. Only one oak board, laced by leather thongs remains, and leather cover has disappeared. 3 pinholes and one pin from clasp hinge. Surviving text begins Matthew fol.25. Ink and smudge markings present. No watermarks fully visible. Last surviving leaf is Acts fol.496 (Acts 13).

The village of Hethersett, situated in the south western hinterland of Norwich was served by the Oxford graduate Christopher Wilson as Rector from 1543 to his deprivation in 1554.<sup>555</sup> Wilson was presented to the living by Sir John Flowerdew, whose notoriety during Kett's rebellion in 1549 will be discussed in the considered in the fourth, contextual section of this chapter.

**Norwich, St. George Colegate [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. X3B.6].**

1548 edition, bound in pasteboard and blind tooled brown leather cover. Traces of Latin MS binder's waste inside front cover. Torn and cut out leaves at front. Surviving text begins at Udall's Preface to Edward VI, fol.6. Acts fols.71-4 missing. Ink markings present. Glove with fleur-de-lys on wrist watermark. English inscription on Luke fol.94<sup>r</sup>. identifies ownership of volume by 'parrishe of St. George of Colegate.' Last surviving leaf is Acts fol.86.

It is perhaps surprising that out of the many sixteenth-century Norwich city parishes only one copy of the *Paraphrases* has been deposited in the Dean and Chapter Library, that of St George's parish, Colegate. Colegate is situated north of the River Wensum in the small city ward of the same name. St George's was served by a chaplain provided by the patronage of the Dean and Chapter. Typically for Norwich, it shared the same street with

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<sup>555</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, v, pp. 23-33.

another parish church, St Clement Colegate, where Archbishop Parker had been educated in his youth and where his parents are buried.

**Paston [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. Z2B.13].**

1548 edition, bound in oak boards, laced by leather thongs and blind tooled brown leather cover. Cord attached to spine, indicating previous tethering to desk or lectern. Frontispiece missing. Fragment of statute governing master-servant relationships tucked inside back cover. Surviving text begins with Udall's Dedication to Edward VI. Ink, smudged and stylus markings present. Last surviving leaf Acts fol.81, with names and inscription identifying volume with Paston on verso side.

**Shipdham [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. X3A.4].**

1548 edition, bound in oak boards, laced by leather thongs and brown leather cover. Parchment Latin MS containing Epiphany plainsong used as binder's waste. Three studded brass corners and central brass stud on lozenge, two brass clasp hinges. Lightly inlaid rectangular pigment borders. Frontispiece Latin inscription '*Ecclesiae Parochiali de Tacolneston in Com. Norfolk*' links volume to a nearby parish. Quatrefoil-topped flagon with 'PLB' band watermark. Last surviving leaf Acts fol.81.

Shipdham is a village that is five miles south west of the market town of East Dereham and was served by a succession of graduates presented by the Bishop of Ely. Master Walter Burnell was Rector from 1526 until 1557, when he was succeeded by James Parker, a Prebend of Ely Cathedral.<sup>556</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, X, pp. 243-49.



**Weston Longville [Dean and Chapter Library accession no. X3A.3].**

1552 edition, bound in leather on oak board, elaborately tooled. First surviving leaf is Udall's dedication to Edward VI, with name of parish added in later hand, with earlier Greek inscription. No other inscriptions. No watermarks visible. Good condition, some water damage in lower corners and top of spine. Two uses of smudge highlighting. Food spillages in John 14 (fols. 486<sup>v</sup>-491<sup>r</sup>). Last surviving leaf is 18<sup>th</sup> fol. of alphabetical table.

Weston Longville is situated beside the River Wensum, north west of Norwich. During this period, Weston was served by a graduate rector, Robert Hardy, from 1543-1556. He was presented by New College, Oxford.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> Blomefield, *History of the County of Norfolk*, VIII, pp. 285-292.

Appendix II. Flyleaf inscriptions in the Ranworth register 1559-1766.

The solid lines indicate the bottom of each inscribed leaf.

Inscriptions.

Mors, mortis, morti, mortem nisi morte dedisset aeternae vitae janua clausa foret

[Death, death, death, surely death before he had given eternal life the gates were shut.]

Transivere Patres simul hinc transibimus Omnes In Caelo Patriam Qui Bene Transit  
Habet

[We have passed on, you will pass on, all Fathers who for good service have a country,  
passed through the heavens.]

Wm. Mackay Vicar of Ranworth

This Register had its First Birth anno 1559

and now Anno 1733

Its 174 Years old

Tempus Edax Rerum

[time devours all things]

Item that Robert Halocke thelder did make his open 't publique submission 't declaracion  
of his conformitie to his Maties Lawes 't statutes the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 1614, in the open  
Church of Ranworth as he was inioyned by Mr. Chaunceler.

(In two different sixteenth-century hands)

Ranworth:

1 dozen Agottos(?)

Ranworth

Ranworth w. Pankford

(In eighteenth-century handwriting)

This Register had

its First Birth

Anno 1559

---

(Another hand)

Mr. Thomas Wright Vicar

1627 (Another hand) Then Mr. Matthew Nowell Vicar

1641 (Another hand) Then Mr. Francis Morley Vicar

1729 Then Mr. Benjamin Griffin Curate

1559 Then Mr. Benjamin Younge Curate

168 Then Mr. William Beever Curate

Mr. William Mackay Vic.

(Another hand)

I quoque Dominus Nelson Vicarius

[also one assistant Nelson]

(Another hand)

1752

George Kenrick. M.A. Wad: Coll: Oxon. Vicar

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Plates.



Plate I. *Paraphrases* (1548), Ranworth copy. St Helen's Church, Ranworth.



Plate II. *Paraphrases* (1548), Ranworth copy, on cantor's desk (c. 1450), painted oak. St Helen's Church, Ranworth.



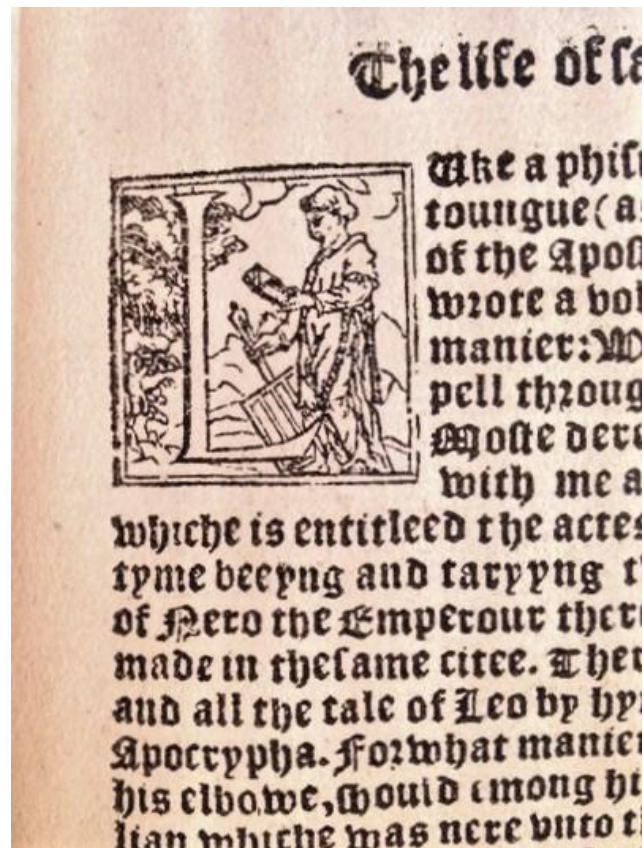


Plate III. Top, St Lawrence and bottom, God creating Eve initials, *Paraphrases* (1548), Ranworth copy,



Plate IV. Front cover, *Paraphrases* (1548), Shipdham copy. Norwich, Dean and Chapter's Library.



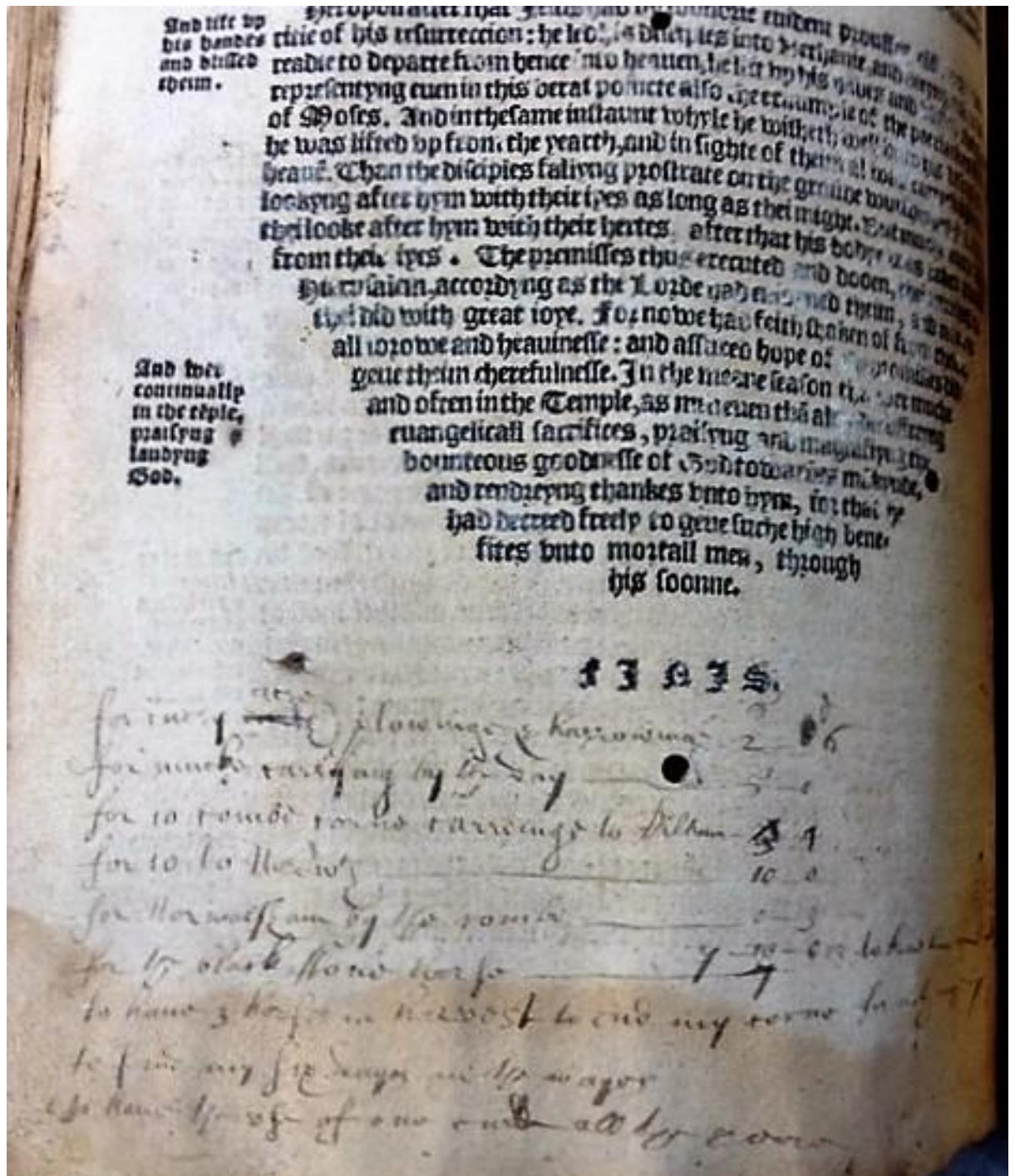


Plate V. Harvest accounts, *Paraphrases* (1548), Bacton copy. Norwich, Dean and Chapter's Library.

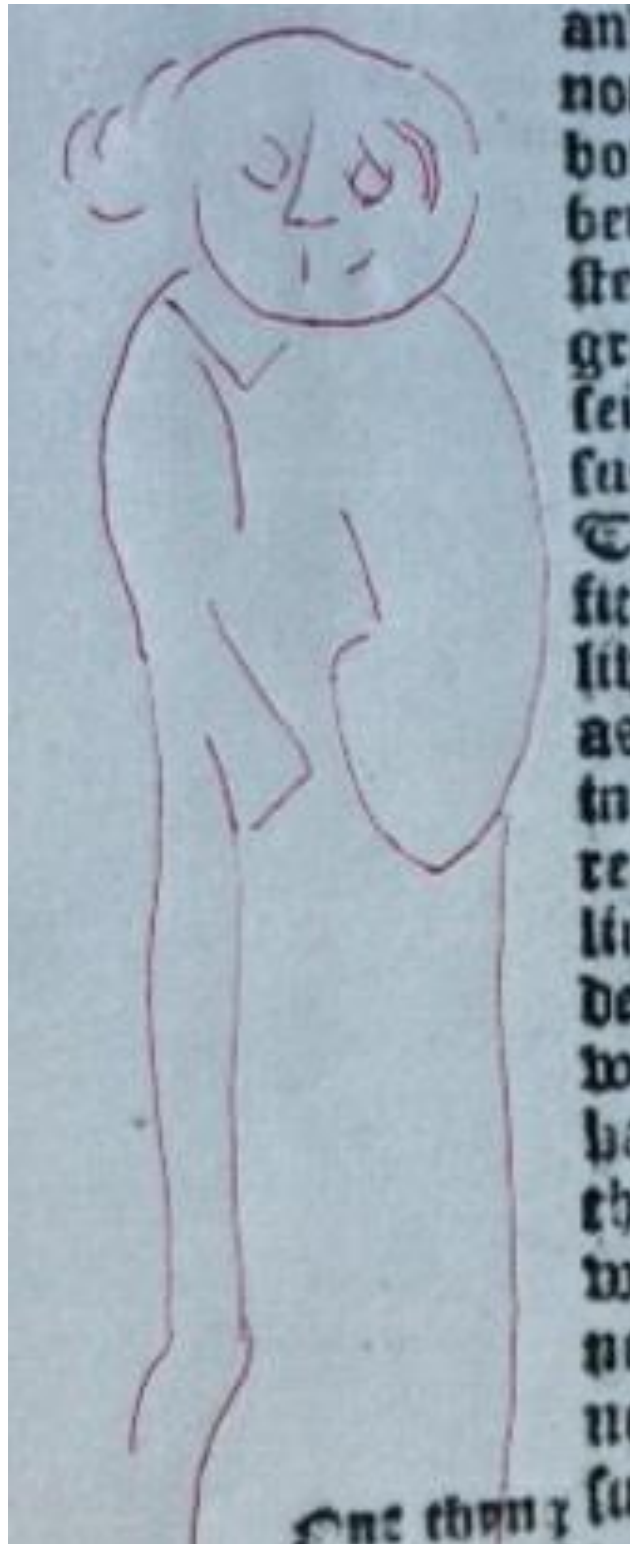


Plate VI. Marginal image of scholar, blind marking (highlighted in red), *Paraphrases* (1548), Paston copy, Mark fol. 57<sup>v</sup>. Norwich, Dean and Chapter's Library.



Plate VII. Left, plinth marginal marking, *Paraphrases* (1548), Ranworth copy, Mark fol. 8<sup>v</sup>. Right, Corbel bracket, limestone, fourteenth century, St Catherine's Chapel, Norwich Cathedral.



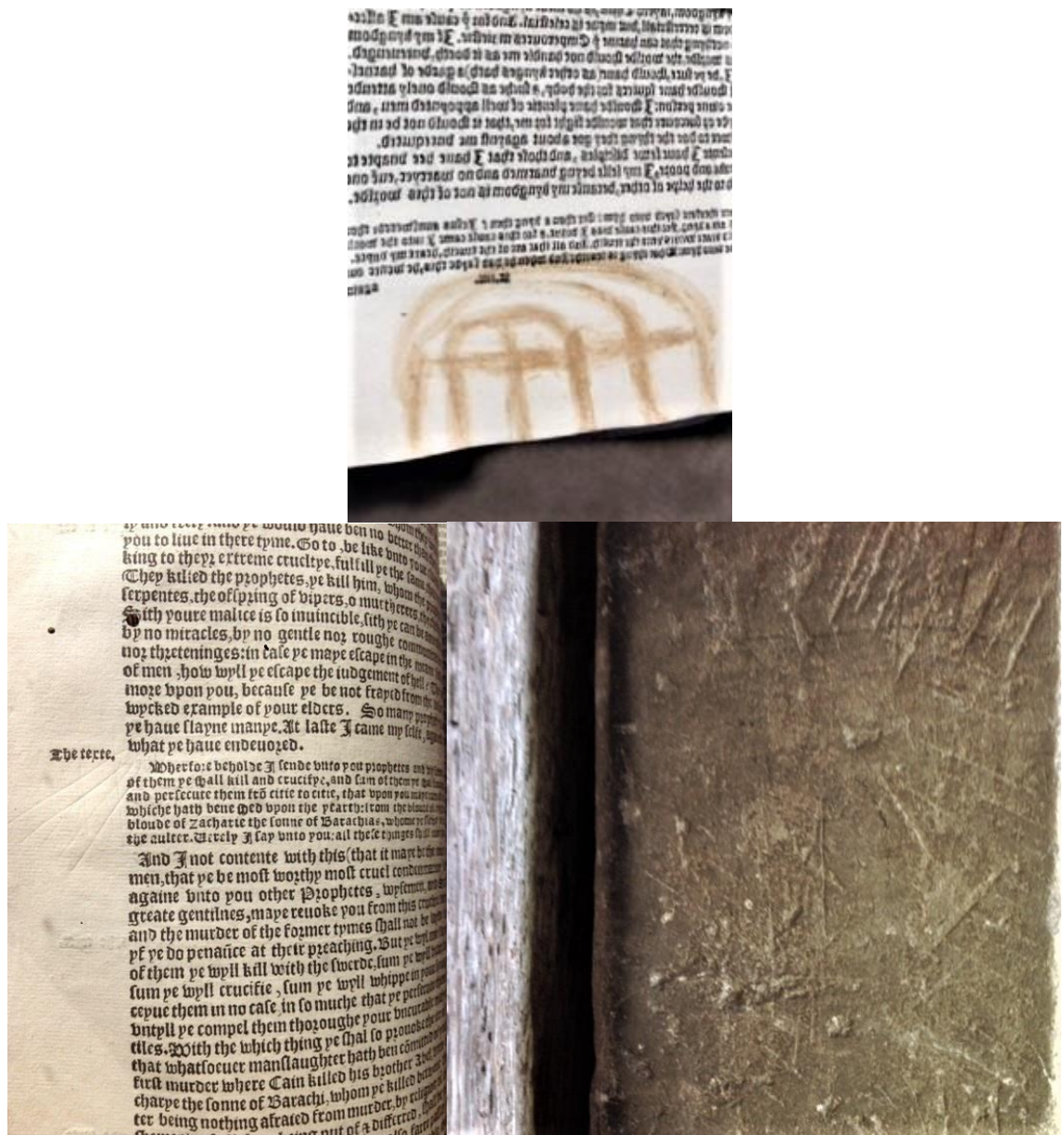


Plate VIII. Top, Smear mark, bottom margin, John fol. 93<sup>r</sup>. *Paraphrases* (1548), Paston copy, Norwich, Dean and Chapter's Library. Bottom left, Diagonal blind left margin graffiti, *Paraphrases* (1548), Ranworth copy. Bottom right, Graffiti marks on south door jamb, St Mary's Church, South Walsham, fifteenth-sixteenth centuries.





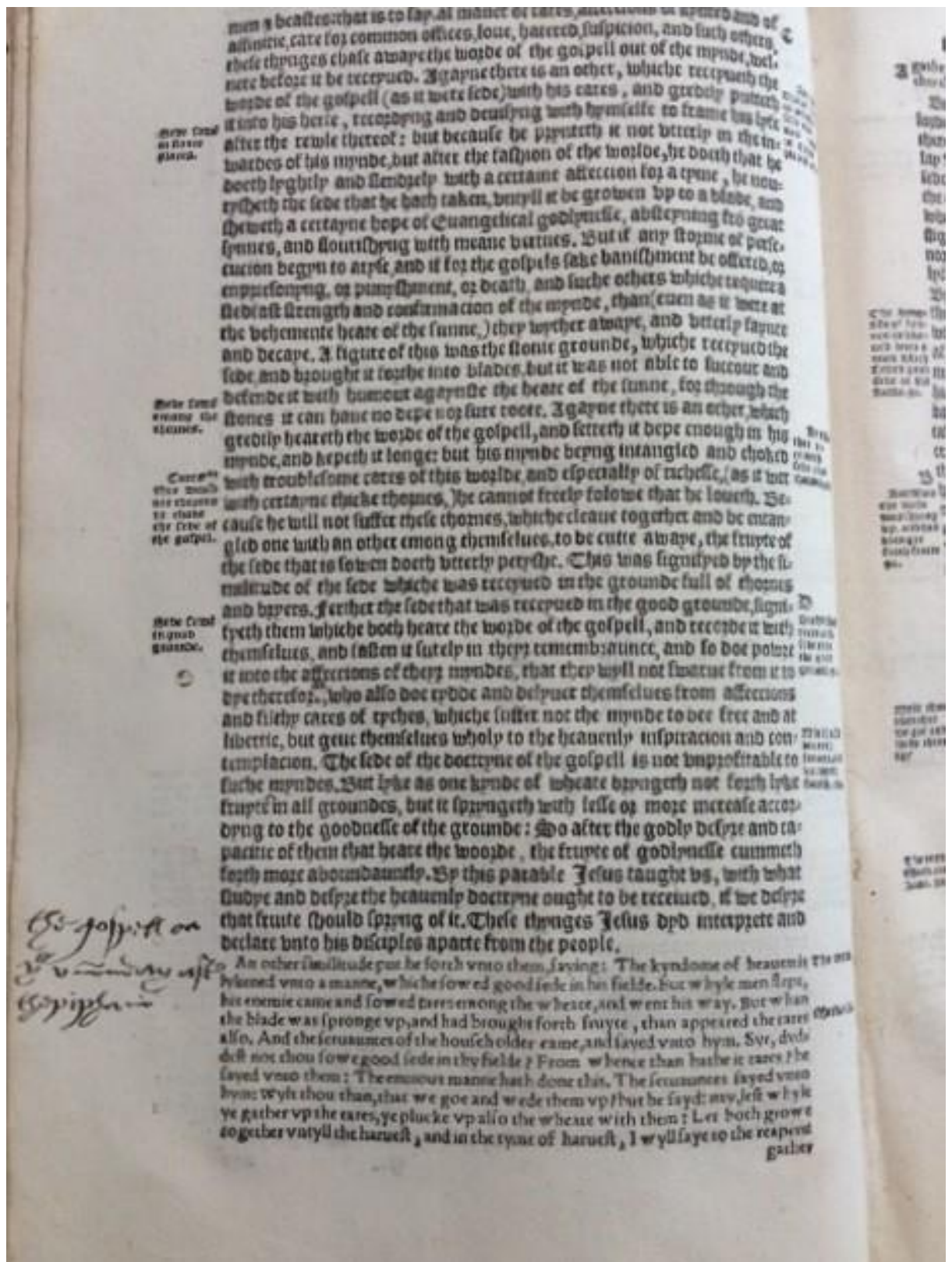
Plate X. Lectionary inscription, *Paraphrases* (1552), Ashby St Mary copy.



Plate XI. Ranworth cup, silver, William Cobbold (Norwich, 1567), covered by paten, silver, undated (medieval).



Plate XII. Hallmark detail, Ranworth cup, silver, William Cobbold (Norwich, 1567).





Plate XIII. Ranworth and Whitlingham cups, silver, both by William Cobbold (Norwich, 1567).



Plate XIV. Parcel gilt inscription and rim detail, Upton cup, silver, Peter Peterson (Norwich, 1567).



Plate XV. Comparison of shape between the Ranworth Cup, (Norwich, 1567), and a Gothic style chalice, (twentieth century).



Plate XVI. St Lawrence's South Walsham Communion cup, silver, William Cobbold, (Norwich, 1567).



Plate XVII. Chalice, gilt, (London, 1527), sceptre mark. Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh.



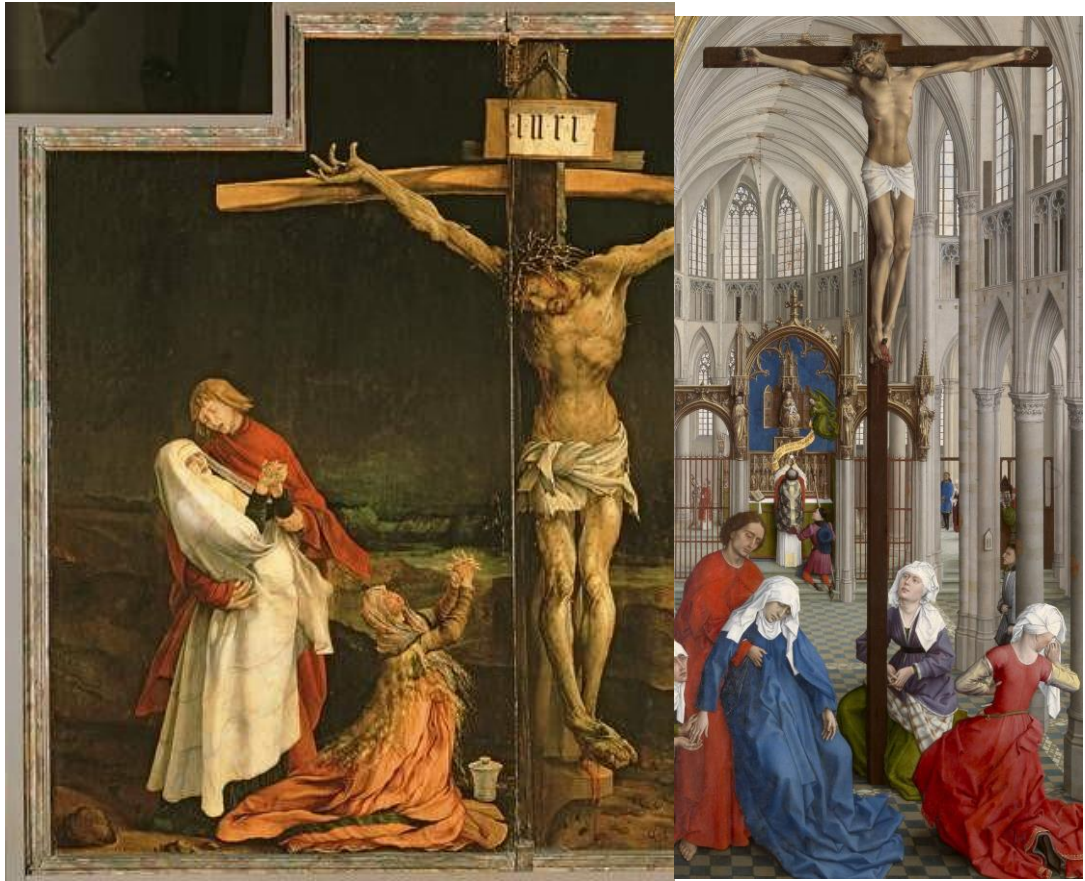


Plate XVIII. Representations of the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist, detail, in Matthias Grunewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, (1515), oil on panel, Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar, and Rogier Van Der Weyden, *Altarpiece of the Seven Sacraments* (c. 1445-50), oil on panel, Koninlijk Museum, Antwerp. Photograph © Bridgeman Education.



Plate XIX. Administration of communion, woodcut on paper, *A Book of Christian Prayers* (London: Day, 1578), fol. 62<sup>r</sup>.

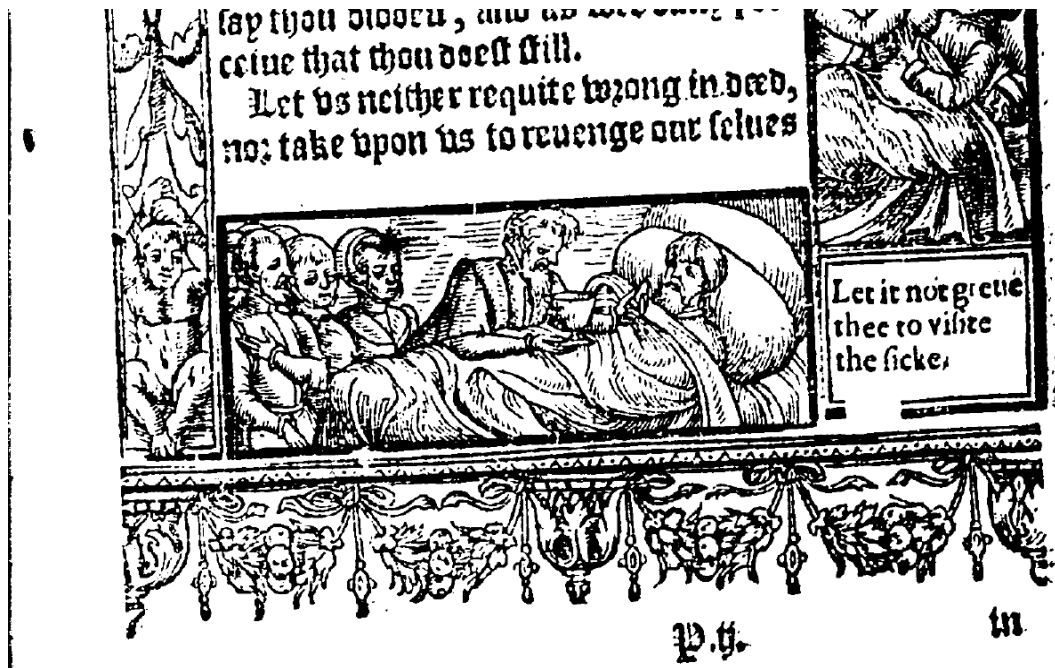


Plate XX. Communion of the sick, woodcut, *A Book of Christian Prayers* (London: Day, 1578), fol. 62<sup>v</sup>.





Plate XXI. a. Ledger stone with inlaid brass memorial to Robert Fevyr, Rector of St. Nicholas, Salhouse, Norfolk (1519). Photograph © Simon Knott 2015.  
 b. Ledger stone of Thomas Sheffield (1509)?, Vicar of St Helen's Church, Ranworth.



Plate XXII. Monument to Thomas Holdiche (1579), stone, St Helen's Church, Ranworth.



Plate XXIII. Easter sepulchre (fourteenth-century), stone and oak, St Helen's Church, Ranworth.





Plate XXIV. Sepulchre tomb of Sir Robert Herling, Kt, (fifteenth century), stone, SS Peter and Paul's Church, East Harling. Sepulchre tomb, stone, fifteenth century), St Mary's Church, Kelling. Photographs © Simon Knott, 2007.

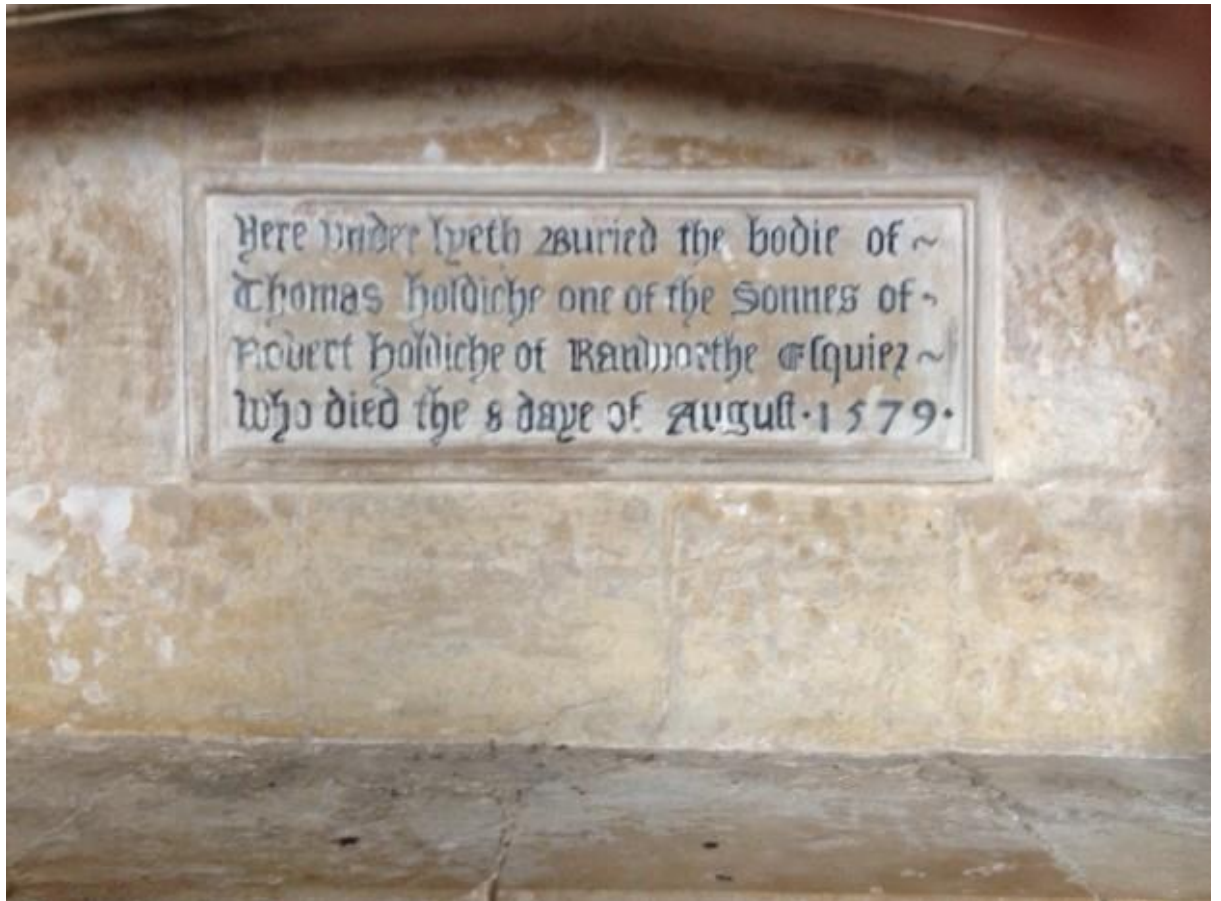


Plate XXV. Inscription detail, monument to Thomas Holdiche (1579), stone, St Helen's Church, Ranworth.



Plate XXVI. Escutcheon detail, monument to Thomas Holdiche (1579), stone, St Helen's Church, Ranworth.





Plate XXVII. Monument to Edward Warde (1583), stone, St Wandregesilius's Church, Bixley. Photograph © Caroline Rawlings, taken after fire damage in 2004.



Plate XXVIII. Escutcheon, helmet and crest detail, monument to Edward Warde (1583), stone, formerly in St Wandregesilius's Church, Bixley.





Plate XXIX. Family group detail, monument to Edward Ward (1583), stone, St Wandregesilius's Church, Bixley. Photograph © Caroline Rawlings, taken prior to fire damage in 2004.



Plate XXX. Monument to Robert and Elizabeth Suckling (1611), stone and polychromy, St Andrew's Church, Norwich, and cenotaph of Sir Robert Houghton (1623), stone and polychromy, St Mary's Church, Shelton, Norfolk. Photographs © Simon Knott, 2018.



Plate XXXI. Lady Mary Houghton detail, monument to Sir Robert Houghton (1623), stone and polychrome, St Mary's Church, Shelton, Norfolk. Photograph © Simon Knott, 2018.





Plate XXXII. Monument to Thomas Holdiche (1579) in relation to south parclose panel with box pew hinges, St Helen's Church, Ranworth.



Plate XXXIII. Surround detail, monument to Thomas Holdiche (1579), stone, St Helen's Church, Ranworth.



Plate XXXIV. *Piscina* and drain hole detail, stone (c. fourteenth century), north aisle of St Margaret's Church, Upton.





Plate XXXV. Unknown artist, *Holy Kinship* retable, oil on oak panel, (c.1480), St Helen's Church, Ranworth, © Mark Cator, 2017.



Plate XXXVI. Sealed void (detail) beneath the *Holy Kinship* retable, stone and lime mortar, (post c.1550), St Helen's Church, Ranworth.





Plate XXXVII. Berney monuments, stone, (left, fifteenth-century and right, 1584), St John the Baptist's Church, Reedham, Norfolk.



Plate XXXVIII. Monument to John Berney, esquire, (?), stone, (1461), St John the Baptist's Church, Reedham, Norfolk.



Plate XXXIX. Monument to Henry Berney, esquire, stone, (1584), St John the Baptist's Church, Reedham, Norfolk.



Plate LX. Effigies and inscription detail, monument to Henry Berney, esquire, stone, (1584), St John the Baptist's Church, Reedham, Norfolk.



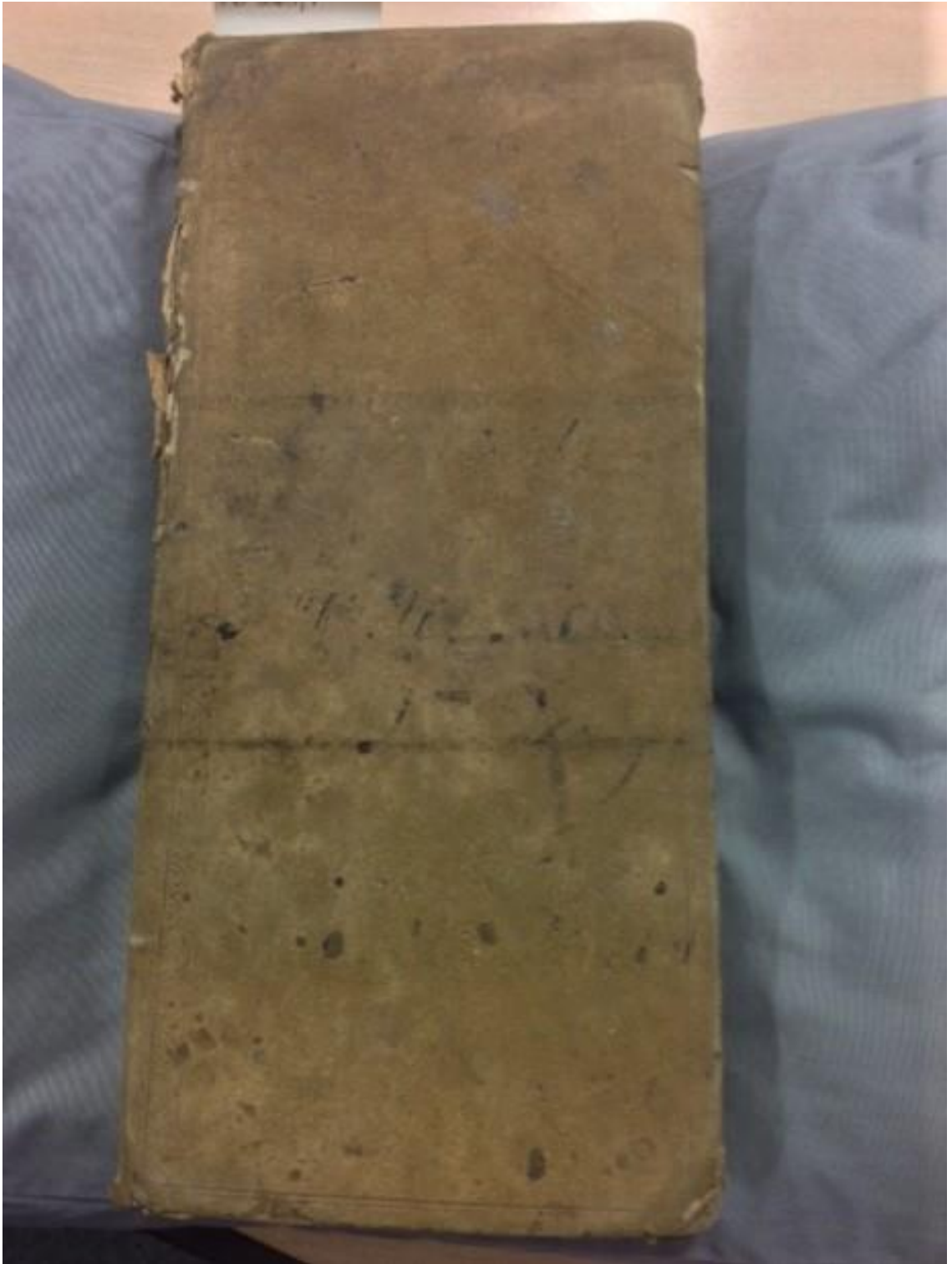


Plate XLI. Ranworth parish register, parchment, (c. 1597), with leather binding, (c. 1729). Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre.

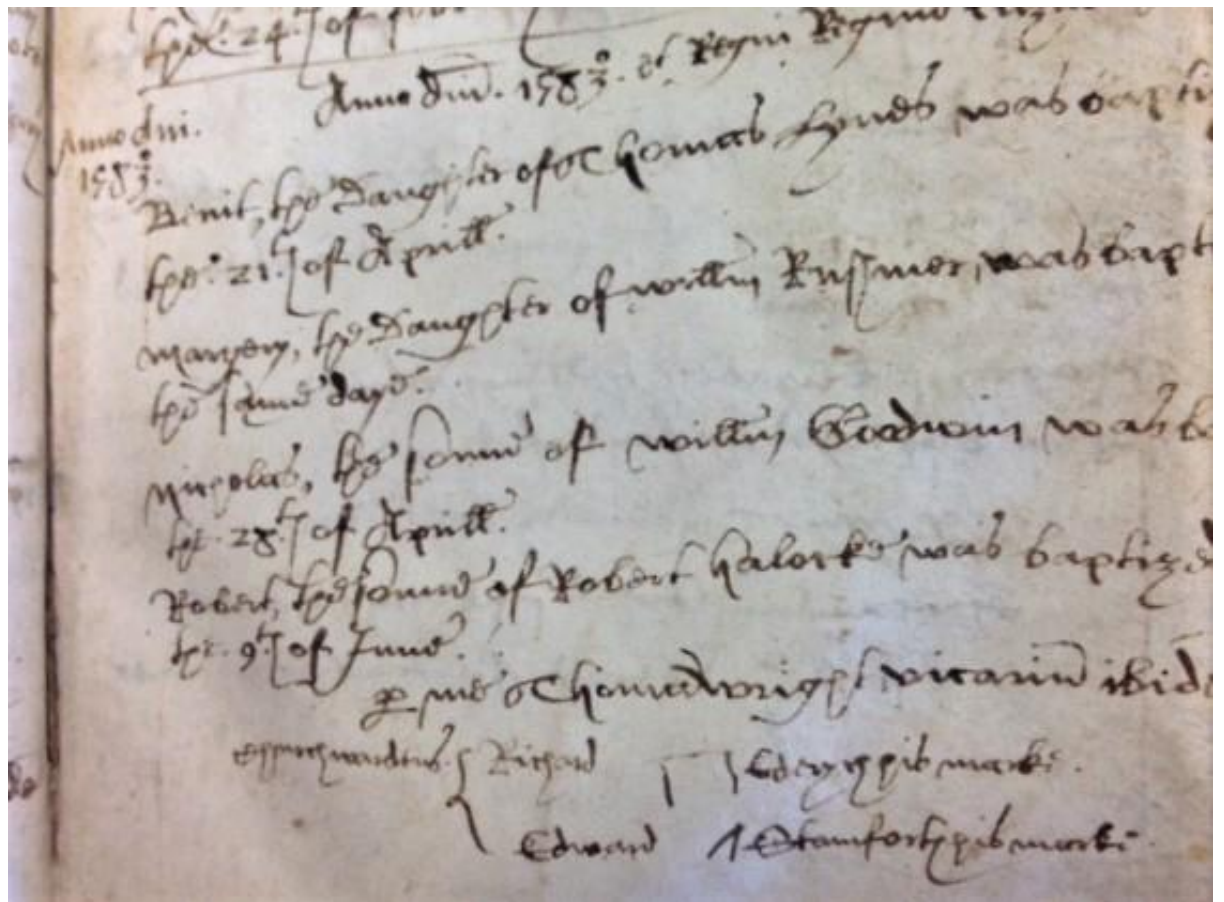


Plate XLII. Signed leaf of baptism entries May 1581- June 1583 (detail), Ranworth parish register, parchment, (c. 1597), with leather binding, (c. 1729). Norwich, Norfolk Archive Centre.



Plate XLIII. Parish chest, oak, (*c.* fifteenth century). St Helen's Church, Ranworth.

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